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AB ORIGINE

EDWARD RICE

Mine own infirmity, her frightening strength
Have drawn me.
I probe into her heart.
All shadows all her joys are mystery
In which I dwell,
And see my counterpart.
Her mountains reach to see,
As do my dreams,
Beyond the fading skyline of today
Into a future,
Moulded to efface
The binding presence of a pointed way.
Her sea,
The restless heavings of the waves,
Are of my passions tide.
They rise,
And flow to eat an easy way,
Soon to return and for a time abide
Within the compass of a growing bed.
I am her flesh
A pigmy miniature,
Complete with all the labourings of her span.
I feel within the clay that is without,
A famined substance,
Glorified as man.
Such stuff knows no content
It must be part of thee
And in the kindred dust
The body and the cell
That holds my soul
Shall rest.
And sleeping, let my spirit rise
To soaring heights of dizzy happiness.

CATHEDRAL BY SEA

NORMAN LEVINE

Waters of church windows vaulted in silence,
Waves hymned by generations of knees,
Crash like foam the stone with the symbol.

Compared with water this thimble of silence
Telescopes height where birdless sings the light
Opening the night and lifting the violence
Of a waterless ship in an age-stone bottle.

Outside is water with all blood pushing.
Wet the seabeaks scream, piercing and crashing,
Call that threshing what you will,
It sings as whips lashing lips to sand,
Page-sermons crash wavelines of land and spire,
Hymns become flowers and shrouds blossom white.

This thimble is symbol of those sea-tons.
This glass-stained ship in the tomb stone-bottle
Fathered all ships scratching the sea-earth.
To weep, to pray, is to drown in these walls.

HAMPTON COURT

MARGARET CROSLAND

'Hampton Court. This is our meeting place'. THE WAVES.

If Percival had come, we should enjoy
the lines of yews that solemnly converge
on fountains twisted in a glassy knot.
We pass the jumbled flower-shapes where
the stone figures look with still surprise;
millions have died—Percival died:
convenient protagonists, they question
us to order. Why then come alone?

The formal red and white against the sky,
the conscious chimneys and the magic clock;
in spring shone daffodils, in summer
a billowy jostle of hollyhock and rosel.
Peering through tall and delicate gates
the children point along the water; *he died*
in Egypt; he died in Greece; all deaths
are one death. The seasons bring no answer.

The picnic families lie hot and still,
watching each other; *Percival has died.*
He found grotesque delight in patterned swords,
the florid ceilings, talk of ghosts and kings,
loved the long gossip of the silent walls.
He is lost now to these centuries.
We thread the maze without his laugh to lead us.
We should have found the way if he had come.

Editorial

SOME months ago I expressed my sympathy with the plight of critics today, who are forced to scramble for every piece of original subject-matter like beggars disputing over a garment, and must turn it over and inside out and pass it from one to another until it falls to pieces. I said, and meant, that I would encourage original writing and that it did not matter whether the names of the writers were 'known' or not. I have received, in consequence, many contributions, have read all of them and printed some. In this New Year I should like, without departing an inch from my resolution, to give some further indications.

Enough of the following has been committed to paper, so that, no matter how skilfully they are written, they induce 'an unpleasant sensation of fullness':

(1) Stories about misunderstood and sensitive children.

(2) About homosexual schoolmasters.

(3) About 'little men' whose descent from Mr. Polly is not at all in doubt and who break out in various directions. (*World Review* is altogether doubtful about the influence, in the realm of art, of the 'little man'.)

(4) About bull-fighting.

(5) About the world in A.D. 2000 or at any other period following the total annihilation of the human race except the narrator.

(6) About persons who are seized with a sudden feeling of strangeness and that they are living their lives over and over again.

(7) About English travellers (usually middle-aged ladies) who are carried away, or offended by, the care-free spirit of the peasants in some little earthy, sunny, red-winey village of the South. The majority of these stories seem to have no point except to show that the writers have, themselves, visited Cassis, the Costa Brava or wherever it is, and act, I think, purely as an irritant to the reader. I would also suggest that *A Room with a View* can be written once and once only.

(8) A closely allied body of stories in which clergymen are shocked by some manifestation of the earth-spirit. Perhaps it is the indiscriminate appetite for Trollope (who had only the vaguest conception of what vicars really do in their working hours) that is responsible for these notions.

(9) Stories about trees which, having either fallen or been cut down, come into a house through a window, in the character of ghost-trees, and kill the inhabitants. I cannot account at all for the frequency of these stories.

(10) Stories written by cats.

(11) Poems in irregular or free metres, as they are very difficult to write and there are only one or two English poets today who can manage them successfully.

(12) Poems whose 'poeticalness' depends entirely on the use of the words 'bone', 'flesh', 'house of bread' and other discarded apparatus of Dylan Thomas (as bad Georgian poetry depended on 'God', 'beauty', 'silver birch' and 'open road').

(13) Jargon of all kinds, but particularly psycho-analytical jargon.

Having cleared the decks, let me say once again how very glad I am to consider original work.

The other (related) conclusions to which I have come in the past year are: that it is a mistake to treat the work of T. S. Eliot as scripture; that farce (not comedy) is as an art form in the ascendancy, and that the present capital of culture is no longer Paris but Rome.

DESMOND FITZGERALD

Notes

KOREA

Whatever happens in Korea, one thing is clear: it is the sort of war we will have to fight next time. Substitute Russians for Chinese and the basic problems remain the same. Neither Russians nor Chinese believe in over-equipping their men. Apart from the Russian armoured divisions, they both rely on huge masses of infantry, lightly equipped, and very nearly self-supporting. There has, for instance, been as yet no report of the Chinese in Korea using anything heavier than field-guns, and most of their attacks seem to have been made with small arms and mortars. Man for man, it would seem that the American or British soldier possesses overwhelming superiority of firepower. But it is not a question of man for man; it is a question of man against men. Our armies have got to be prepared to face and halt on the ground floods of Asiatics, men whose objectives are simple, who have no communications to cut, and whose commanders have no objection to their being killed. These forces will not fight according to the Western rules of war. There have been complaints, for instance—almost as if it were cheating—that the Chinese do not stay on the roads but move across country by night. Again, the Air Force chiefs have built up a legend, and deceived themselves with it, that nothing can stand up to air bombing in the field. In fact, such bombing has very little effect on determined troops. On 7 December Mr. Shinwell stated 'quite emphatically' that there was no thought of withdrawal from Korea in our mind or that of the Americans. Whether we withdraw from Korea or not is largely a question of prestige, but in Europe it is a question of survival. The Americans and our own brigades in Korea are fighting in terrible weather conditions against enormous odds, but our admiration for their conduct must not conceal the fact that our troops in Europe may have to face the same, or even worse, odds and conditions, and cannot afford to retreat.

WEST AND EAST

Korea has also shown us the danger of a war on two fronts. The States of Western Europe cannot defend themselves. They can make a contribution, which we hope will be a large one, but the main burden will fall upon ourselves and the Americans, the very people who are also responsible for the defence of the Middle and Far East. The rival claims of West and East for priority in men and materials is already a serious embarrassment to the defence of either. It was a problem which arose in the last war and was solved by the creation of a Combined Chiefs of Staff. The demands of some American Republicans for a concentration of effort in the East—'the Asialationists'—show that it has arisen again, and surely it could be solved in the same way. The basis of such an organisation has already been created by the North Atlantic Treaty, which could be expanded to prepare the defence not only of Europe, but of the whole free world.

THE COLOMBO PLAN

The automatic reaction to the announcement of any new plan nowadays is to ask how much it will cost. The Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia will cost £1,868,000,000. The countries involved—India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore and North Borneo—can find some of this money themselves, but over £1,000,000,000 of it will have to be provided by other countries. Britain has so far only promised a small subscription. The plan itself, which was prepared by the Commonwealth Consultative Committee, does not say who is to, or can provide this vast sum—as obviously it could not—all it says is what could be done with the money if it were available, and it appears that all that can be done with even so vast a sum of money is to hold the economic and social position in South East Asia in about the same state as it is now.

The population in Asia is increasing at an alarming rate, chiefly due to the benefits

we have already introduced, and now somebody has got to increase industrial and agricultural production simply in order to keep pace with that increase in population. This is not perhaps a very ambitious object after all the talk we have heard on all sides about raising the standard of living of the masses in Asia, but it is at least a realistic one which deserves our support, if possible. But, as things are, it is almost certainly beyond Commonwealth means, particularly at a time when we are finding it difficult to raise the money needed for our own defence.

TRUMAN'S DEFEAT

Little can be said to mitigate the defeat which President Truman has suffered in the mid-term Congressional elections. His precarious hold on the Senate, where the Democrats have retained the right to appoint the committee chairmen by a narrow majority of two votes, cannot hide the fact that the southern Conservative wing of the Democratic Party will join with their Republican colleagues in effectively blocking any further Fair Deal measures.

The causes of the rout are confused. There is always a mid-term swing of the pendulum but there seems little doubt that the Republican attack on American policy in China and the campaign of Senator MacCarthy who, while failing to produce one Communist in the State Department, nevertheless succeeded in suggesting that there were hundreds, had a greater effect than was expected.

However, the defeat of such Fair Deal stalwarts as Senators Lucas, Myers, Thomas and Tydings, and the strong support given to the Conservatives of the Republican Party, such as Senator Taft of Ohio, does not necessarily mean a change in, much less a reversal of, American foreign policy, particularly as regards Europe. Most of the important authorising legislation covering present plans for international co-operation has already been passed. The Economic Co-operation Act dates from 1948; the North Atlantic Treaty was ratified last year and the Mutual Defence Assistance Programme is already coming into operation. It is only in the matter of financial appropriations under these heads that the new Congress can prove awkward. With American troops and agencies deeply committed in every corner of the world, it would need a bold politician indeed to return to the pure isolationism of the twenties.

EAST GERMANY

There were some surprises in the new Russian Zone Cabinet. Heinrich Rau, long under a cloud for his pointed criticisms of President Wilhelm Pieck, re-emerges as head of the new State Planning Commission. It had been supposed that this post would go to Walter Ulbricht, the senior deputy prime minister, but it is clear that Ulbricht prefers to exercise his immense power from the sort of ill-defined position which serves a similar purpose in the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Russians apparently still find it expedient to provide a sop to the remnants of the bourgeois parties by permitting the Christian Democrat, Herr Dertinger, to retain his post as Foreign Minister.

The Evangelical Church in Eastern Germany can now have few doubts about its future. Buried in the usual mass of platitudinous adulation proper to a satellite state, Herr Otto Grotewohl's policy speech at the announcement of the new Cabinet contained a violent attack on the one remaining organised opponent to complete Sovietisation. Honeyed overtures to the Federal Republic in Bonn to set up a joint constitutional council on the basis of the Cominform resolution in Prague could not disguise to Eastern Germany's Protestants that they are due to become the target for the type of repressive measure hitherto reserved for their Catholic colleagues in other Soviet satellites.

WEST GERMANY

State elections in Hesse, Würtemberg-Baden and Bavaria have shown the Western Powers that German feelings on their own re-armament cannot be ignored. After waging a bitter campaign against Dr. Adenauer's defence policy, the Social Democrats not only acquired an overall majority in Hesse, but ousted the Christian

Democrats as the largest party in the other two states, although right-wing coalition majorities are still assured.

The post-war anomaly of left-wing nationalism, with their call for complete equality in Europe, rather than in military matters alone, may have accounted for some of their increased support, but their basic appeal was to German pacifist sentiment. They were also, as an opposition party, in a position to blame the Federal Government for the present shortage of coal in Germany and for the sudden tightening of exchange restrictions made necessary by the excessive expenditure abroad that has been taking place in the last few months.

The elections in Berlin went the opposite way. There the Social Democrats lost their majority, largely because the Berliners, for obvious reasons, would not accept Dr. Schumacher's insistence that the Federal Republic should not make a contribution to Western Defence.

The obliteration of Communist representation in the three Länder is counterbalanced by the emergence of a firm right-wing radical vote supported by the under-privileged and resentful refugees. Should the Western Allies feel their position threatened by the emergence of German pacifism as a political force, the possibility of a revival of militarism must be an even more distasteful alternative.

STRASBOURG

The gloomy forecasts of a complete breakdown in the affairs of the European Assembly at Strasbourg have happily not been fulfilled. Somewhat to their own surprise the delegates have emerged with a workable compromise between the continental federalists and the British and Scandinavian insularists. The Council of Europe—Ministers and Assembly alike—has now chosen the 'functional' road to European unity. The British Labour Party delegates, hitherto the scapegoats for most of the lack of progress so far, adopted a more sensible and forthcoming tone and found that their call for solid practical work on the specialised authorities on the lines of the Schuman Plan brought an unexpectedly warm response.

The Assembly answered their call by appointing committees to propose draft conventions for two such authorities—agriculture and transport. A special commission has been asked to study the long and detailed draft on a political authority drawn up by Mr. R. W. G. Mackay.

The other main business of the Assembly consisted of a somewhat empty reiteration of their demands last August for the setting up of an integrated European Army. The final ballot provided the unusual spectacle of eighty-three approving votes, nineteen abstentions and seven unanimous nays from the German Social Democrats. The British Labour Party delegation, under the leadership of Mr. Hugh Dalton, pointedly absented itself from the debate and finally abstained, on the grounds that military matters do not come within the competence of the European Assembly.

FREE TRADE UNIONS TO COMBAT COMMUNISM

A world-wide plan to combat Communism has been agreed by the executive board of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions after a three-day meeting in Brussels. Large sums of money have been voted and strong regional organisations are to be set up in Singapore, Mexico and North Africa. Publication and propaganda staffs are to be increased and particular attention will be paid to the task of combating Communist infiltration into the immature trade unions in the Far East. The European Regional Office will have its headquarters in Geneva. The seventeen European countries represented have twenty-one million affiliated trade union members. One of the first tasks will be to organise an information service in the Iron Curtain countries.

COAL

'Of course it is in principle desirable that there should be a mining engineer on the Board,' said Mr. Noel-Baker in reply to questions about the resignation of Sir Charles Young from the National Coal Board. This ingenuous statement followed not long after the announcement that we, England, the island built on coal, would have to import coal from America in

order to fulfil our export contracts. The failure to produce coal in quantity is bad enough, taken merely as a particular failure in one field of activity, but it is much greater and wider than that. It is a failure in the general purpose of a centrally-planned economy. In the days when the Socialists were the Party of criticism, their most effective charge against private enterprise was its failure to keep production 'in phase'. In some particulars, production was less than genuine social demand, and in others it was in excess of effective demand as expressed by purchasing power. Hence 'Full shops and empty purses', 'Want in the midst of Plenty', and all the rest of the catalogue of economic shortcomings and misdeeds. The defenders of private enterprise did not necessarily plead Guilty to the Socialist indictment, but they could not deny that a serious practical problem had been posed, nor that it required an answer. Now, for five years, the Socialists have tackled the problem and produced an answer—Coals to South Wales, and Italians to the pits.

EXCUSES

The situation is immensely serious because a threatened shortage of coal means that the whole of our economy is moving out of phase. If we are short of coal, we shall be short of everything. The crisis is fundamental and shows signs of becoming more, and not less, acute in spite of the grateful decision of the miners to work a Saturday shift. Unfortunately, the Government apparently believes that a surplus of excuses can make up for a shortage of coal (or of houses). It may be true that the shortfall in our coal production is only part of a world-wide development, but its implications are not the less ugly for that reason, and it is merely frivolous to argue, as Mr. Noel-Baker did, that the shortage is an unfortunate by-product of the policy of Full Employment. There is not a worker in Britain whose job does not depend on a sufficient supply of coal. The public may put up with many incidental hardships and inconveniences for the sake of Full Employment. But there is one thing they will not put up with, and that is Unemployment.

PRESTIGE

Coal is more than a matter of domestic production for us. It is also a matter of international prestige. The whole world judges our capacity to revive and prosper by our capacity to get coal out of the earth. Coal, in fact, is our one solid industrial asset, and when that fails, we have ' Want in the Midst of Plenty'. The great fuel cut of January 1947 did more than plunge half the country into idleness and darkness. It also shook the confidence of our friends all over the world and gave heart to our enemies. Sensational journalists in the United States wrote that Britain was finished. Their estimate was grossly exaggerated, and for that reason it was contemptuously dismissed over here, but the dismissal was as mistaken as the exaggeration. One of the most damaging consequences of our small newspapers is the fact that foreign opinion is reported only in its most extreme and sensational manifestations. The ordinary British citizen did not understand that many sober and friendly Americans began to have doubts of Britain's capacity to handle her most urgent problems. The renewal of the shortage cannot fail to reinforce these doubts.

CREDIT

The people of Britain are seldom much disturbed by what foreigners think of them. This quiet indifference to outside opinion is certainly a more admirable quality than the extreme touchiness of some other nations, but it carries its own dangers. After all, we are a mercantile nation, living largely on international credit and prestige. If our credit is blown upon, even for bad reasons, the effect will be much the same as if the reasons were good. Our national position is no different from that of a private trader. If a private trader's credit and standing become suspect because of a false or even malicious rumour, he will suffer nearly as badly as if he had deserved the loss of confidence. His complaints may secure him a certain amount of sympathy, and even damages from a Court, but sympathy is not accepted as security in any bank in the world—and there is no World Court to award us damages.

TWO GERMAN ARMIES

BRIAN CONNELL

It is only five years since the *Wehrmacht* was disposed of, its cadres dispersed, its ethos eradicated, its memory execrated. Yet, with the organisation of a federal security force in the Western German Republic to match the threat of the Russian-sponsored *Volkspolizei* in the Eastern Zone, it has acquired twin offspring almost before its former officers could have advanced a single rank. Not since Wellington and Castlereagh offered an alliance to Talleyrand at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, in order to bring the Eastern empires to their senses, has the pain of human memories had to surrender in such measure to the mutabilities of power politics. Yet the total collapse of the Grand Alliance which won the last war has compelled this drastic reconsideration of the situation.

The Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and the United States have only taken the decision to permit the formation of such an armed force in the Western Zones with the greatest reluctance. For eighteen months, their representatives in Germany have had to listen to the honeyed pleas of the Federal Chancellor, Doctor Adenauer, for a 'realistic' approach to the problem. Despite his careful public utterances, he has never ceased to advocate in private conversation the necessity of such a federal police force, together with a guarantee of military security from the Western Allies. Now he has received both. If ever the Soviet Union has to account for the political crimes which it has committed in the post-war years, its responsibility for the reactivation of these two monstrous sprigs of the *Wehrmacht* will come high on the list.

Whatever political indoctrination or environment the officers of these two forces have experienced since the war, they are class-mates, *Du* friends, mutual correspondents and household words to each other. German soldiers have played politics since the time of Frederick the Great. One group has attained a position of delegated power and responsibility under the Russians. Now the people whom we intended to keep out of politics for all time are being offered a similar opportunity in the West. It is beyond computation what use they will in due course make of it. Their underlying duty is to defend Western Germany, if at some future time a certain set of circumstances encouraged the *Volkspolizei* to attack them. There must be severe misgivings as to where their loyalties would lie at such a juncture, with their fellows or with their respective masters.

For all the checks and balances the Western Allies may choose to impose, or persuade Doctor Adenauer to impose, we have placed ourselves in the appalling position of entering a competition for the favours of one of the most cohesive, egocentric, amoral, untrustworthy and completely self-interested and self-perpetuating groups of human beings that European history has ever known. It is a shot of benzedrine in the arm of Germany's right-wing extremists, and a cause of exultation to the present right-wing Government coalition, who are placed in the happy position of being able to train this new growth in a manner suitable to themselves. Such public opposition as has been proclaimed in Germany to this quasi-reactivation of the *Wehrmacht* has come largely from the Social-Democrats, who are thoroughly disturbed by the connotation of political power implied in the return to public status of members of the Junker and professional officer families.

One inevitable result is that a most regrettable fillip will be given to the prestige of an organisation known as the 'Brotherhood', originally conceived as a means of perpetuating Germany's 'dynamic' ideals,

by the S.S. officers who thronged the prisoner-of-war camps in Britain in 1945. This political trade union of former officers is headed by a former S.S. Standartenfuehrer, named Alfred Franke-Grieksch, who was on Himmler's personal staff at the end of the war, Colonel Bech-Broichsitter, once one of General Hasso von Manteuffel's officers in the Grossdeutschland Division, and a Doctor Achenbach, who is an economist and its elder statesman. A dependent *Bruederrat* has been formed in every State, and in every *Landschaft* or district. To them the word goes out from the twin centres of the 'Brotherhood' in Hamburg and Bielefeld.

Until now they have been principally occupied with organisation. But now, with many of its members and blood-brothers about to obtain influential and suitable employment in the new security force, their political aims are again being emphasised. Its leaders have turned back to Metternich for the analogy of Germany as the 'strong core' of Europe. At the appointed time it is their intention that the 'Brotherhood' should assume leadership, either by constituting itself as a political party or by taking over the most promising party available, and Franke-Grieksch has already hinted broadly at infiltration into the refugee party which did so well in the recent state elections in Schleswig-Holstein. Franke-Grieksch has gone on record as saying that the *Bruederschaft* is preparing to take over political power in the winter of 1952–3 when 'the present German parliamentary system will have broken down utterly and irreparably.'

Pulses must indeed have quickened in the sordid furnished rooms and attics where Hitler's former officers while away their broken lives. General Kurt Student, the man who threw us out of Crete and was subsequently cleared of war crimes charges on the testimony of British officers who had fought against him, ekes out a marginal existence in a Hamburg suburb. When I last saw him, his wife was just selling her remaining pieces of jewellery. Field-Marshal von Arnim, who surrendered to us in Tunisia, is a factory night-watchman in a small town in the American Zone. Colonel-General Guderian, the armoured specialist, has retreated to a rustic existence in a tiny village in Bavaria. His erstwhile senior officer, Colonel-General Franz Halder, sits in two bare rooms in the village of Koenigstein, just outside Frankfurt. In another room on the other side of the town lives Admiral Backenkoehler, last Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy.

Most of these men are past the retiring age anyway. But below them stretches the whole gradation of officers who saw service in the length and breadth of Europe. Colonels have become boiler-minders; Lieutenant-Commanders run little provincial dancing schools. For five years they have been submerged in degradation and poverty, their only talent rusting and decaying. They see personal salvation only in the reactivation of the sole form of existence they ever mastered. Now some of them see a glimmer of light. The Western German Government has been swamped with applications to join the new security force.

This force was to have been organised by General Count Gerhard von Schwerin, who was commanding a motorised corps when he was captured by British troops in Italy towards the end of the war. The Count has now been dismissed from his post by Dr. Adenauer for his public advocacy of a reconstituted *Wehrmacht* of ten divisions and the re-introduction of universal military training as Germany's proper contribution to a European Army. The question of his successor has yet to be decided. General Hans Speidel, who was Rommel's Chief-of-Staff, is being mentioned in Boon as the force's Inspector-General. Unlike many of his more unfortunate colleagues, Speidel, a brilliant staff officer, has been able to keep his faculties sharpened since the war by lecturing to Swiss army officers on military tactics.

The immediate strength of the force was set at 30,000 officers and men, by the Big Three foreign ministers, a figure which they said was 'subject to upward revision'. However, the Ministers-President of the eleven Western German States have informed Dr. Adenauer that their budgets cannot bear the bulk of the expenditure involved, and have limited the force for the

time being to 10,000 men. They will meet to reconsider the situation next March. It will be organised into battalions of motorised garrison police, armed with rifles, pistols, machine and tommy-guns, tear bombs, light mortars and light armoured cars. Two police training schools, officered mainly by career policemen who served in the German Army as field or staff officers, were opened near Bonn during October. One will train the force's officers and the other will give instruction in radio, the use of armoured cars and the handling of technical equipment.

For the time being, at least, their activities and exercises will be carried out in the full view of the Western world, and under the watchful eye of the occupation authorities. It would be less disturbing if the same criteria applied to their rivals in the Russian Zone. But that is a darker and quite different story, some of which can now be told for the first time.

* * *

There is no record that Aemilius Paulus, the Roman consul whose troops Hannibal surrounded and destroyed at the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C., ever formed a Praetorian Guard for the use of his conqueror. This distinction was reserved for his namesake, Field-Marshal Friedrich von Paulus, commander of the German Sixth Army which surrendered at Stalingrad in 1943 to Colonel-General Chuikov, commanding the 62nd Siberian Army and now the Russian Commander-in-Chief in Germany.

The roll call of the General officers of that defeated army reappears as the list of organisers and senior officers of the *Volkspolizei*, the People's Police of the Soviet Zone, designed as the chief Russian instrument for the extension of their sway over the whole of Germany.

It is still one of the major mysteries of the war how the Russians managed to convert to their own use the stiff-necked Prussian staff officers who surrendered with Paulus, and those who fell into their hands at subsequent stages of the German retreat. The full measure of the Stalingrad disaster has hardly been appreciated to this day. The Germans say that 125,000 troops and 5,000 officers, the remnants of the twenty-two divisions cut off by Marshal Zhukov's pincers, surrendered to the Red Army. The Russians admitted at the time to capturing 91,000 men and 2,700 officers. Yet within a few months of the débâcle barely 7,000 of them still survived, of whom a third were officers. Exhausted by the fighting, abandoned by the overtaxed Russian commissariat, and compelled to march foodless for days on end across the trackless Kalmuck steppes in one of the worst winters on record, the German prisoners died by the thousand. Many of them now rest in mass graves to the south of the city they failed to capture.

About five hundred General and Senior staff officers were transferred in warmly-heated trains to special camps at Krasnogorsk and Susdal, while the remaining officers, in some cases after experiences almost as terrifying as those which befell their troops, were put into large monasteries near Yelabuga and Orankie. It was not long before the Russians set about organising a 'National Committee' amongst these officer prisoners, designed to enlist their support for a movement pledged to dethrone Hitler and end the war. German Communist emigrés and Russian political officers did everything in their power to persuade them to join the movement, but despite their despair over the manner in which they had been abandoned by Hitler and ordered to endure the holocaust of the encirclement 'to the last man', their minds were not yet ripe for such a move. But the Russian interrogation teams found means to crack their façade. Some were found to have been in charge of the German camps for Russian P.o.Ws. in the Stalingrad area, like the one at Voroponovo, where prisoners died like flies, and others had charges pinned on them of ordering the shooting of hostages. In each case they were offered the choice of undergoing a trial for war crimes or joining the 'National Committee'. Very few failed to take the latter course.

At the same time the top Cominform Germans were being used to undermine the morale of the senior officers. Walter Ulbricht, now Vice-Premier in the Eastern Zone 'government', worked for months in the Orankie camp; Wilhelm Pieck, now

the Eastern Zone President, was busy in the Susdal and Krasnogorsk compounds. For a long time they made little headway. Then they made their first convert, Colonel-General Walter von Seydlitz, bearer of one of the most illustrious names in Prussian military history and Commander of the 51st German Army Corps in the Stalingrad disaster. The descendant of the victor of Rossbach and Zauendorf in the wars of Frederick the Great had always been an outspoken opponent of the Bohemian corporal who was his Commander-in-Chief, although his loyalty as a soldier had been sufficient to break up a mutiny of Paulus' generals who wanted to defy their orders to stand and fight. Together with most of his general staff colleagues, he had been subjected in the Krasnogorsk camp to the mental undermining of a Professor Arnoldi, one of Moscow's leading psychologists.

At first it seems to have been Seydlitz's intention to form a 'Union of German Officers' to combat the dubious personnel and malign influence of the National Committee. His chief concern was for friendlier relations with the Russians in order to improve the conditions of the prisoners-of-war they were holding, but once he had started on the slippery slope of collaboration, it was the Russians who dictated where it would end. Where it ended was in the appearance of his name as the co-sponsor, with the exiled Communist poet Erich Weinert, of an enlarged and more effective 'National Committee'. Among the Generals who signed the manifesto were Alexander Edler von Daniels, Otto Korfes and Martin Lattmann. Korfes, a former keeper of the *Wehrmacht* secret archives, had, through some personal quirk, shown himself friendly to the Russians almost immediately after capture, as Commander of the 91st Infantry Division at Stalingrad. It was he, it is said, who found for Seydlitz the historical parallel for his defection—the switch to the Russian camp of the German military hero General Yorck after the Battle of Tauroggen in Napoleon's Moscow campaign.

Von Paulus soon followed in von Seydlitz's footsteps, and once these two illustrious names could be used by the Russians, they had little difficulty in obtaining all the recruits they wanted for their purposes. Once the flow reached the required proportions, the two most senior officers were quietly dropped. Little is heard of them now.

In other cases, more direct pressure was brought to bear on certain of the general officers. Vincenz Mueller, for example, one of the few non-Stalingrad members of the 'National Committee', who surrendered the remnants of the Army Group of the Centre to the Russians in 1944, was accused of having ordered some of the Gestapo exterminations in the Donetz area. As the brilliant organiser who first laid the foundations of the whole 'People's Police' system in his homeland, he became the most active of all the renegades. Martin Lattmann, another of the Generals who has been prominent in post-war Germany, is thought to have joined the 'National Committee' out of ambition and personal vanity, and showed himself willing to take the step even before Seydlitz. But the success of Russian propaganda methods is probably shown most vividly in the case of Arno von Lenski, who commanded the only German Armoured Cavalry Division, officered exclusively by members of the aristocracy. This haughty East Prussian turned Communist out of political expediency and was destined at one time to become the commanding officer of the *Volkspolizei*. He has lately fallen into obscurity and his place has been taken by General von Weech. With Vincenz Muellerk, von Lenski shares the doubtful honour of being the only general officer to have sworn loyalty to Communism in the 'School for Activists' which was gradually built up in the Krasnogorsk camp. Others of their comrades now helping them in Germany include Generals Wulz, Freitag, Ulex and Heinemann.

The vast organisation which was gradually built up under the patronage of these Prussian officers now has its members distributed in dominating positions in the administration of the Russian Zone of Germany. In the province of Mecklenburg, sixty-five per cent of the police chiefs and council chairmen are former members of

the 'National Committee'. In Brandenburg the percentage is fifty-two, in Saxony forty-seven, in Thuringia thirty, and Sacksen-Anhalt sixty-one. But most of these men exert their power in an unobtrusive fashion. The main weight of these former right-wing converts is brought to bear in two organisations. First, the nationalist-minded, but completely Russian-controlled, *National Demokratische Partei*, one of the most sinister Soviet brain children, designed to canalise right-wing radicalism into the channels of Russian opportunism, and, secondly, the People's Police.

This *Volkspolizei* has been conceived much on the lines of the Nazi S.S. *Verfuegungstruppen*, which Himmler started to organise in 1935, and which eventually emerged as the 'Waffen-S.S.' divisions, originally planned as a reserve force to be utilised in the event of a serious challenge to the régime. It seems fairly clear that the Russians have cast the *Volkspolizei* for a similar rôle.

Plans for the formation of this body were drawn up by the Soviet Military Administration in July 1948, to coincide with the release of large numbers of prisoners-of-war, who had been carefully vetted for reliability during their long incarceration. A start was made in October 1948, with the training of the half-dozen *Bereitschaften* of 250 men each, which had by then been formed.

They were quartered out in guarded barracks and camps near most of the big towns, and many is the story of the armed columns which make country roads ring with the marching songs once so popular in the *Wehrmacht*. More than half the training time is taken up with military instruction and only about an eighth with what could be regarded as normal police duties. By the end of 1949, no less than thirty-five *Bereitschaften* had been formed, their strength increased fivefold over the original size, to 1,200 men each. By the end of 1950 it was planned to have fifty groups—an armed force of some 60,000 men. And these units are quite independent of the 30,000 frontier police, another 30,000 ordinary police, the whole criminal investigation organisation, and the women traffic police. With a population of about 17,000,000 people, Eastern Germany is in the position of supporting about 200,000 police, twice as many as the Weimar Republic had in the whole country, and nearly twice as many as the police force strength of the Western Zones, with a population of nearly forty-five millions.

Training and organisation, under these expert former General Staff officers, has been slow and careful. The men train out of their barracks, and apart from parades and ceremonial occasions, when they appear in spotless uniforms, and with a march discipline that is a terrifying reminder of Hitler's days, do not take part in ordinary police duties, nor are they seconded to the ordinary police. In fact, the complete training schedule of the first *Bereitschaft* to be activated was only completed in the summer of last year.

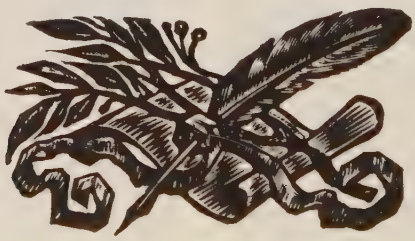
The Russians have armed these units with heavy and light machine guns, machine pistols, rifles and infantry guns. Two units composed of volunteers from the Communist youth movements in Germany, made up entirely of the seventeen to twenty-one age classes, have been equipped with anti-tank rifles. One, called the *Ernest Thaelmann Bereitschaft* after the Communist leader killed by the Nazis, is stationed at Grossenhain, and the other at Langensalza. There are even reports that some of the units have been equipped with Mark T-34 tanks, but this has yet to be confirmed. Most of the arms are of German manufacture, displacing the original miscellaneous collection of Czech, Russian and Polish weapons, which have now been withdrawn. The transport pools of the *Bereitschaften* have not yet been standardised, and consist of a motley array of odd lorries, private cars and motor cycles. However, some of the older units have received new 'Horch' lorries, and B.M.W. cars and motor cycles, and plans have been drawn up to make this equipment standard.

Their training is divided into four sections: technical, political indoctrination, general staff duties and supplies. The *Bereitschaft* commander, in fact, holds the rank of *Oberpolizeirat*, but is always addressed in military fashion as *Herr Major*. Equivalent to him in rank is his deputy,

the *Politkulturleiter*, the political commissar, whose duty it is to teach the party line and report to the political police any cases of suspected deviationists. These, if incurable, are quickly removed. From a document which has found its way into Western Allied hands, it has been ascertained that out of 1,408 hours spent in instruction, 717 were devoted to military training. This comprised basic training military tactics, rifle training, map reading and engineer and signals training. Subjects concerned with police duties, such as criminology, street traffic regulations and relationships with the civil population, only accounted for 185 hours, or 13.1 per cent of the time of these 'policemen'.

The foundation laid, the first group of senior General Staff officers has now been superseded. Vincenz Mueller now has a political rôle as head of the National Democratic Party, and the other two have slipped out of the limelight. All the police forces in the Eastern Zone nominally come under the control of Doctor Karl Steinhoof, the Minister of the Interior, the chief of whose police department is Doctor Kurt Fischer, a Moscow-trained Communist of the Ulbricht stamp. The man who has been appointed to succeed Mueller as head of the training department is an old international Communist trouble-maker, named Wilhelm Zaisser. He was better known in the Spanish Civil War as 'General Gomez', commander of the Thaelmann battalion in the International Brigade. Zaisser is a Red Army Colonel, was head of the Russian civil war school, a founder member of the 'National Committee' and for four years Minister of the Interior in the State of Saxony. He has now been promoted Minister of State Security in the Central Government. General von Weech, a former Luftwaffe communications expert, was first brought in to establish an independent communications network linking up the Bereitschaft units with the state headquarters and the Zonal administration headquarters. Another departmental head is Major-General Hans Wulz, commander of the 4th Corps at Stalingrad, and an artillery expert.

The ease with which these Junkers have accommodated themselves and canalised their ambitions into the requirements of Russian policy is the most tangible example of a latent trend which might well provide the pattern for future collaboration between Germany's nationalists and the Soviet Union. Vincenz Mueller has lent himself to the next step of forming a political party which is designed to include in one organisation those of a like mind who cannot as yet see their way clear to joining the Socialist Unity Party outright, still less to giving their support to the emasculated rumps of the bourgeois parties. While the Russians clearly regard this concentration of activist elements as a prophylactic measure, there are enough Germans of this stamp all over Germany to provide the cadres for a nationwide movement designed to lead a Fourth Reich into the Russian camp. Willing and amenable right-wing totalitarians are much more likely to provide the groups to implement such a *rapprochement* than are the Old Guard Communists; and the Russians know it.



BRITAIN, EGYPT AND THE MIDDLE EAST

H. S. DEIGHTON

It is not so long since the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean were capable of absorbing the attention of a greater part of the world. Here, in the worst months of the war, at the moment when the invasion of Britain seemed most likely and when there was an acute shortage of weapons with which to meet it, the British Cabinet gave dramatic emphasis to the strategic importance of the Middle East by sending a large part of its small reserve of tanks overseas, for the defence of Egypt. For more than a year, until Russia and the United States became involved, it was the only theatre of fighting on land. The first victories of the war were won in defence of Egypt, which became the base from which campaigns were fought in Greece and Syria, as well as Libya, and from which the destruction of the Italian Empire was contrived and brought about. Even after the victory of El Alamein—itself fought on Egyptian soil—which marked the turning of the tide of German successes in the west, this cardinal importance continued, and Cairo, where a full member of the British Cabinet had been resident during most of the war period, remained what it had certainly seemed in the early years—almost a second capital of the Commonwealth, to which Egypt does not belong.

Middle Eastern affairs, since the end of the war, have been very far from uneventful, although they have not, with the notable exception of the crisis in Palestine and the emergence of the new state of Israel, captured popular attention as they did nearly ten years ago. It is not difficult to see why this has been so. The area is of first-rate importance in world affairs because of its strategic position as a major centre of world communications and the meeting-place of the three continents of the old world, and because it is, after the United States, the second largest source of oil. In time of war it is vital; its possession might well determine the issue. It is, then, worth fighting for, whatever the cost may be, whereas in peace its importance, although very great, is potential. It will only attract a full measure of public attention if the great powers are led, in recognition of its potentialities, almost to come to blows about it. Interest in the 'cold war' has swung from one to the other of the extremes of the long line that separates East and West. First Berlin, then Korea, have brought the contestants to within sight of war. The peoples of the Middle East have been absorbed in their own affairs. These, indeed, have involved the powers—in Greece, the civil war reflected their differences. The Soviets put pressure on Turkey and Persia, and President Truman came to their aid. Britain and France fell out over Syria, and in Egypt, and, to a lesser extent, in Iraq, bitter internal struggles have borne a close dependence upon relations with the British. Thus, strangely, perhaps, it has only been the affairs of Palestine, whose relevance to the absorbing struggle is more remote, that have attracted for a while the full attention of the world. It may be that this is due to the very fact of the importance of the Middle East. For, while the Russians may have wondered about Anglo-American determination to feed Berlin and even have been surprised at the reaction to their adventure in Korea, they can never have doubted that an aggression towards the Mediterranean, or the Persian Gulf, would be met with war.

Because of its strategic importance, the Middle East has been of the first consequence to the great powers of modern times ever since they began to have vital interests outside Europe itself. This concern is no less great today, even though the centres of power have migrated to other

continents. But although the essential problem, which depends upon the relatively unchanging facts of geography, remains the same, the circumstances in which each generation must seek to meet it change with the times. It might fairly be said that in recent years they have grown more difficult.

In 1791, under the guidance of William Pitt, the British government awoke to the importance of the national interest in the Middle East and, by a minor diplomatic revolution, adopted a policy which, in essentials, has been followed ever since. At that time the area was part of a single empire. Not only the Middle East, but the Balkans and North Africa as well, owed obedience to the Turkish Ottoman Sultan, at Constantinople. But, since the time of Peter the Great's visits to Western Europe in search of technical knowledge, the Turks had showed themselves less adaptable to modern ways than their northern neighbours, and, for almost a hundred years, had been giving ground before them. At Pitt's instigation the British Government committed itself to the policy of denying the Middle East to any great power which might be regarded as a potential enemy. At times this has meant France and, more recently, Germany, but usually, as today, the fear was of Russia. In 1914, Britain had lost her influence with the Sultan, and so her predominance in the affairs of the Middle East. But she was to recover it, in arms, with a victory which brought his Empire to an end. Since 1918, the British problem has been no longer that of bolstering up a single, decaying, oriental empire, but one of sustaining a group of xenophobic and far from homogeneous successor-states, and attempting to retain their confidence.

The Ottoman Empire was the creation of conquest, by which a large body of dissimilar peoples acquired an involuntary political unity. At the time of its final dissolution, it had long been under pressure from the forces of modern nationalism which had affected its various peoples, and, in consequence, the modern Middle East owes such unity as it possesses to the strategic circumstances which oblige the great powers to conceive of it as a whole. In the north are the two minor, but tough, nation-states of Greece and Turkey, sustained, as they need to be, by direct and close relations with the Western powers. Farther south, and across the Mediterranean, there is a much larger group of peoples, among whom the common heritage of the Arabic language and, for the majority, the Muslim religion, has often seemed to offer the basis for a high measure of political unity. Arab nationalism was encouraged by the British during the First World War, but there were bitter and long-standing rivalries among the Arab peoples which led many competent observers to doubt whether a single Arab state, such as that envisaged by T. E. Lawrence, would be capable of surviving for long. In the upshot, the matter was not tested. For there existed, too, mutual rivalries between Britain and France that were only solved by the creation of zones of influence which made a comprehensive Arab state impossible; and the 'Balkanisation' of the Arabic-speaking provinces of the former Ottoman Empire was rendered complete by the fact that the British Government had adopted the policy of sponsoring the Jewish 'National Home' in Palestine.

Hatred of French rule in Syria, and bitterness about the progress of Zionism, which was greatly accelerated by the growth of Nazism in Europe, gave rise, during the nineteen-thirties and forties, to a genuine Arab public opinion, which was shared by the Egyptians. It was upon this that, with British encouragement at the end of the war, the Arab League was built. A strong, self-confident group of Arab states might, it was felt, be sufficiently free from xenophobia for its governments to recognise openly the circumstances which bound it in interest to the Western powers, and to Britain in particular. But the League struck the hard rock of Jewish resistance and splintered into its original fragments. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the disintegration of the Sultan's Empire made an agreement with his government seem an insufficient guarantee for the security of the Middle East, the British government had sought added strength by way of particular arrangements in strategically important parts of his dominions. Under Disraeli, it took over Cyprus, and, under

Gladstone, British troops occupied Egypt. So, too, in the last few critical years it has again been upon the occupation of bases in Egypt that Western plans for security in the area have depended, so that Anglo-Egyptian relations are once more a matter of general interest, as the most important political problem in the Middle East.

The 'special relationship' between Egypt and the United Kingdom, of which politicians are apt to talk when the word 'friendship' is patently inappropriate, and when 'alliance' is a positive call to battle, is, in fact, a reality and a long-standing one. Hardly seven years after Pitt had committed Britain to the policy of excluding Russia from the Middle East, British forces were hurried to Egypt with the object of expelling the French, who had invaded the country under Bonaparte in 1798. From that time Egyptian affairs have been a close concern of the Foreign Office. In 1882, a rebellion made it seem likely that chaos or a foreign occupation of Egypt was inevitable. Either was an anathema to Whitehall, and, after an unsuccessful attempt had been made to arrange for joint action with France, British forces occupied Egypt, and, by their continued presence in the country, made Britain its virtual ruler. Forty years later, the beginning of the present phase in Egyptian history coincided with the final downfall of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1918, with that empire at the mercy of their victorious forces, the Allies issued a declaration of their intentions towards those who had been its 'subject peoples', stating that they had in view 'the complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations, drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations.' It was the period of President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'; self-determination was in the air, and it is hardly surprising that this declaration was taken in Egypt to herald the beginning of a new phase of national independence.

Under British guidance the administration of Egypt had attained a high degree of order and efficiency. There had been something of an economic renaissance, accompanied by a sharp rise in population, which has not yet abated, but this administration was somewhat unimaginative, and it was foreign. Not surprisingly, from the beginning of this century, a nationalist movement had been growing up which, by 1918, had reached considerable proportions. In the last year of the war this movement crystallised and became generally popular, in consequence of its demand that Egypt should be represented at the coming Peace Conference. The movement took shape as an organised political party, with the name *Wafd al-Misri* ('the Egyptian Delegation'), round this demand, and, after the Allied declaration of November 1918, its leader, Saad Zaglul Pasha, called at the British Residency with a formal request for the recognition of the Egyptian case. In this he was later supported by the Egyptian government.

In spite of the considerable sympathy with which it was met among official British circles in Egypt, the request was turned down by the British government, and the history of Egypt for the next four years was that of a struggle between Egyptian nationalism and British resistance to it, based upon that concern for defence which had given rise to the occupation. This was the formative period of the Egyptian national myth. Under the leadership of Saad Zaglul, 'the father of the nation', and with a surprisingly consistent readiness, which still exists, to distinguish between the British people and British policy, there grew up a story of an 'heroic period' in modern Egyptian history, with its martyrs, its prophets, and its heroes, of the story of the 'struggle for the national aspirations'.

After the outbreak of war with Turkey, the country's official status had been that of a British protectorate. But, in 1922, in an attempt to settle the problem, the British government declared Egypt to be an independent state, elevated a member of the family which had previously ruled the country under Turkish suzerainty to a newly-created throne, although reserving to itself a number of matters, chiefly concerned with defence. The move was not totally unsuccessful, but it came too late to satisfy entirely a national enthusiasm which had been encouraged by years of

opposition. But, at any rate, it brought to an end a situation in which the protagonists in the politics of the country might, with reason, be said to have been the Egyptians and the British. For it brought on to the scene a third factor, the Palace. A new and ambitious king was unlikely to have easy relations with the Wafd, which demanded the extremes of adulation for Saad Zaglul, whose successor, Nahas Pasha, is still 'the leader'. The new kingdom was given a parliamentary constitution modelled on that of Belgium, but a very great majority of the electorate was illiterate; the resources of a government in being were considerable, and it was rarely that it expressed the popular sentiment in the country, which was almost always predominantly Wafdist in sympathy.

A number of the more prominent nationalists fell away from their party, and it was with these, and other groups, who made up in wealth and influence for what they lacked in popular support, that the Palace was able to rule Egypt, with short intervals of Wafd government, during the next few years. Egypt was at this time, and indeed is today, a battle-ground of fierce personal and group rivalries. A genuine demand for complete national independence remained, but was expressed as anti-British feeling only at times of crisis or election. The governments in power worked, as they had to, with the British. Their opponents, of whatever party, habitually castigated this necessary co-operation as a betrayal of the national interests, and kept alive a degree of national feeling which, in its turn, embarrassed them when they came to power.

The Abyssinian crisis of 1935 alarmed the British government, which began at once to adapt its policy to meet the needs of a possible war. In so doing, they reverted to the traditional British policy of trying to make friends with the majority of the Middle Eastern peoples, which, in the nineteenth century, had meant with the Muslim Turks, and today means their Arab successor-states. In 1936, when a Wafd government was in power, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was signed. It had twenty years' validity, and provided for a considerable increase in the reality of Egyptian independence, together with a mutual agreement for defence in time of war.

The agreement with the Wafd was a first step in the pro-Arab policy, of which the Palestine White Paper was a later expression. In the years after 1939, these arrangements were put to the test of war, and, from that test, they may be said to have emerged successful. It is true that, during the last few years, British policy in the Middle East has had very much the appearance of failure, but this is due chiefly to circumstances which have arisen since the war, above all to the split in British feeling and interests which arose around the issue of Palestine. Over this the British conscience was genuinely divided, and British interests equally were divided, by the necessity for seeking to be at peace with both American and Arab opinion:

Just as the British were not at one over the problem of Israel, so they were divided about Egypt. That understanding of Egyptian national feeling, which led officials at the end of the First World War to support their claim for representation at the Peace Conference, has been deep and persistent. Surprisingly, perhaps, it has often been strong in military circles. It was Lord Allenby, the soldier, who was sympathetic to Egyptian claims and Lord Lloyd, the civilian, who was scornful of them.

Something of this division of opinion showed itself during the recent war. It has recently been emphasised in the published memoirs[1] of Field-Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya, who makes no attempt to conceal his disapproval of the assertive policy of the British Embassy. In February 1942, when the Wafd was committed to support the Allies, and doubts were felt about the loyalty of some of the King's advisers, the Ambassador obliged the King to accept a new and distasteful government by a show of force. This incident has left a very deep impression on Egyptian opinion, and, while the issue of its immediate necessity could be said to be, as yet, unresolved, there can be no doubt of its unfortunate effect now and during the foreseeable future. Two things are certain. The step was taken against the advice of the British

[1] *Eight Years Overseas, 1939–1947*. Hutchinson, 1950.

military leaders. Lord Wilson describes himself as having been 'astounded and horrified' at the news of it, and gives it as his opinion that 'the personal equation had had a good deal to do with it.' Further, if this action were necessary, there can be no question that its consequences were disastrously ignored when, after the end of the war and the lifting of the press censorship, which had naturally forbidden all mention of it, the ambassador, who had been its principal actor, was left in Cairo living like a viceroy, to the embarrassment of his country's friends and to the indignation of her enemies. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in spite of the hopes rested on the Arab League and upon the gesture of evacuating British troops from the centres of population in 1947, Anglo-Egyptian relations have been uneasy during the last five years.

It should not be forgotten, however, that even if the utmost tact had been used by the British government, and if, for once in the story of Anglo-Egyptian relations, concessions had been made before it was too late, there are then very real difficulties in the way of any settlement as satisfactory as, for example, that which seems to have been made with Indian nationalism. If there is a serious difference of British opinion about the right policy towards Egypt, there can be none about the issue of the Sudan. There Egyptian nationalism, although perhaps understandably, has made demands which have the appearance rather of imperialism. In that land of the upper waters of the Nile, admittedly of vital consequence to Egyptian well-being, the British administration in the time of Lord Cromer took possession of what had, for a short while until a successful revolt, been nominally Egyptian territory. The subsequent administration, under the nominal Anglo-Egyptian condominion, has been a model of trusteeship in operation, and there can be little sympathy in the outside world for the Egyptian claim to incorporate, without consulting, a people for whom the declared British policy is independence in less than twenty years.

Beyond this particular difficulty, there is a wider and more general one. There is no doubt that the Western need for peace in the Middle East, which arises from the acute international situation, has had, and is having, the effect of keeping in being in Egypt, as in Iraq, governments and social systems which, by their corruption and by the utter disproportion in the distribution of wealth which they maintain, can have little sympathy from Western minds. By all modern standards these countries stand in need of a social revolution. Since the traditions of their peoples do not inspire the expectation of peaceful change, it is all too likely that such change, when it does come, will be violent, and violence in the Middle East, at a time when a major war is not inconceivable, is something that no Western government could possibly contemplate. The tragedy of the Middle East in the present world situation is that in their need for security the Western powers are undoubtedly prolonging the life of a system with which they can have no sympathy. It is the tragedy of the Middle East that it has no equivalent of the Congress Party capable of offering a prospect of peaceful change.

THE DANGER OF A COLOUR WAR

C. J. M. ALPORT, M.P.

A FEW weeks ago I met an Egyptian professional golfer who was on his way home. It was his first visit to England, and he had done remarkably well in the Open Championship. Yes, he was coming back, even though he had been turned out of two hotels because of his colour, and no British professional had offered to play him a single practice match during the whole season. It is true that one of the hotels asked him to leave because some American lady had complained. But this does not excuse either the action of the managements or the discourtesy of his English colleagues. These may seem small incidents against the great background of the colour problem in the world. But it is by incidents such as this that the problem itself has been mainly created. Until we are prepared to treat any man regardless of race or colour on his merits, we cannot hope to build a basis of partnership either among the peoples of the Commonwealth or among the nations of the world.

Unless we can create that new sense of partnership based on the ideals of the Western World, there is a danger that within the next generation Communism may sweep Africa as well as Asia. The propagandists of the Kremlin will have little difficulty in substituting 'Colour War' as their battle cry of the second half of the twentieth century for their 'Class War' slogan of the first. They know quite well the explosive resentments which the colour problem can produce. They know, too, that there are millions in Africa, America and Asia whose ignorance and poverty make them easy converts to the Marxist gospel of hate. The low standards of living of most coloured communities give force to their argument that the class and colour wars are simply different sides of the same coin.

Since 1945 racial friction has been intensified in many parts of the Commonwealth, but it is not limited to them. In the U.S.A., Paul Robeson has centred on his striking personality the racial resentments of the American negro. More significant, in Egypt, where Communism is making rapid progress, a new twist is being given to the rivalry between the older Turkish aristocracy and the Egyptians and Sudanese. Many of the former are fair skinned; the latter are black or brown. Agitators are now exploiting this fact in support of their plans to undermine the present régime. If Egypt did go Communist, direct Russian influence in Africa would become a new and potent factor in the Cold War.

The same arguments are being used by Communists to mobilise the support of Asiatic peoples for their aggression in the Far East. They claim that the invasion of Korea was a fight to liberate a yellow race from the domination of the white. The wars in Vietnam and Malaya are being portrayed as struggles against Western Colonialism and this, in Marxist eyes, is a synonym for the new war of colour. The power of this appeal is immense. To millions these conflicts are not simple contests between Communism and democracy. They are embittered by all prejudices of newly-awakened Asia against Europe, and of colour against white.

The vast majority of people in Britain are unconscious of the danger which faces European civilisation in so many quarters of the world. Public opinion reacts instinctively against the racial policies of Malan. The marriage of an African chieftain with an English girl creates a passing sensation. In some of our seaports relations between white and black neighbours produce local complications, but the vast

majority of the nation remains unconcerned. Yet we will not avoid the evil effects of colour friction merely by pretending it does not exist.

Colour prejudice is not one-sided. The dislike of some Eastern peoples for Europeans and the opposition which exists in parts of the East and among a number of African tribes to mixed marriages are examples of the workings of the complex in reverse. Wide differences of racial tradition and domestic custom, particularly where the latter concern family ties and the status of women, build barriers which are difficult to overcome.

The attitude to women is of particular importance. Even before the days when equality of status became an accepted fact, the Christian tradition provided European womanhood with a specially-privileged position in society. In many coloured communities their status is different and lower, particularly where polygamy exists. European women living in such countries feel instinctively that social contact with coloured peoples will eventually undermine their own status. They transmit their uneasiness to their menfolk and race friction is the result. The colour problem is always most acute where European women are a comparatively numerous element in the community. It has been greatly intensified during the last century, when they have gone in ever increasing numbers to live and settle in tropical lands.

A second reason for colour prejudice is the fear of a racial minority of being absorbed by a majority with a lower standard of living and less developed culture. The attitude of the Southerners in the United States to the negro, and certain sections of the white population in Africa to the Bantu, are examples of this. The white trade unions in both these areas uphold the colour bar in its more extreme forms. Without the support of their members it is unlikely, for instance, that Malan would be in power in South Africa today. The poorer the European, the more desperately does he cling to his last claim to a privileged status derived from the whiteness of his skin.

The third cause, which mainly concerns the African, comes from the apparent backwardness or inferiority of the Hamitic races as compared with the technical and intellectual standards achieved by Europeans. A recent report by a United Nations Committee stated that there was no basis for any theory of racial inferiority. Those who know the African intimately will agree. His 'backwardness' is mainly due to the savage nature of the continent in which he lives and not to any inborn inferiority of mind or character. This does not mean that generations will not be required in which to make up for centuries of stagnation, but it promises him the prospect of taking his place eventually on terms of equality with the other races of the world.

It is easy for the Communist to gloss over these complex factors and to attribute the whole problem to an attempt by the white man to exploit the black. His arguments are fortified by the story of the slave trade, the callousness of certain individuals and the memory of wrongs committed before public consciousness awoke to the high responsibilities comprised in the modern conception of trusteeship. Feeding, as Communistic propaganda does, on greed and envy, it finds eager listeners among peoples who are anxious to enjoy social, political and economical equality, but who are not always so ready to undertake the self-discipline and patient work which this requires.

The challenge of the colour war is therefore imminent and dangerous. Racial tensions are rising in many parts of the world. The fears and suspicions which they breed are making the task of Communism easier, and weakening the capacity of Western democracy to maintain its hold on the allegiance of vast areas in Africa and the East.

What is our answer?

In the first place, we must make people understand the nature of the colour problem, and put at rest the fears from which it springs. We must make it clear that we are not prepared to allow Communists in the Empire to exploit ignorance and suspicion by equipping Colonial governments with up-to-date publicity organisations. A more vigorous application of our own Colonial Welfare and Development schemes and of President Truman's

'Fourth Point', which promised American help for backward areas, will answer the economic arguments of Communism.

But these alone are not enough.

We must raise the position of women in the Colonies. We must not allow reverence for tribal custom to prolong indefinitely the slave status to which too many are still condemned. More money must be available for their education. They must be awakened to the importance of their rôle in the structure of a modern society, for they must provide the lever by which the standards of living of coloured peoples as a whole can be uplifted.

Above all, it is by our personal contacts and attitude that existing suspicions and resentments can be most quickly dispelled. African and Asiatic students who come to this country are likely to be the leaders of their people in the next generation. Their influence will be quite out of proportion to their numbers. If they are slighted and embittered, they will make dangerous enemies for Britain when they return home. What is required is that we should extend to them the normal courtesy and welcome which is the rightful expectation of every stranger in our midst.

It will not be easy to break down colour prejudice, and the white man cannot do so unaided. Africans, in particular, are apt to excuse their shortcomings by attributing the criticism which these incur to race prejudice. Time and greater self-confidence may remedy this weakness. Our task is to foster that confidence by every means we can. The prime responsibility rests with us. This will be particularly important this year during the Festival of Britain. No doubt thousands of coloured visitors will come to see all we have to show them. They will be more impressed by our attitude to them as individuals than by mere technical or scientific skill. They will remember the rapacity of a landlady or their ejection from a West End hotel long after they have ceased to wonder at the significance of sending a radar beam to the moon.

THEOTHANETICS, THAT WAS

MILO CRIPPS

Suppose an Englishman, twenty years old, to have been asked whether he was a Christian, at different times during the last half-century, and consider the responses elicited. It would suit my book, or rather this article, if they approximated to the following. 'I readily accept,' he might have said in nineteen hundred, 'the majority of Christian concepts, but not, of course, the heinous dogmatic invention'; in nineteen hundred and twenty-five he could perhaps have stuttered, 'My necrophily is never *quite* so ausgesprochen,' or some other such poppycock; in nineteen hundred and fifty it would have been very nice if he just said Yes or No.

In the literary consciousness of this century, spirituality, moribund at its inception, was stimulated indirectly by the psychologists in the early post-war years, groped for in every quarter in the late thirties, and seems today to have been found and accepted within Christianity. For the generation already of age at the beginning of the last war, Christianity was one ground, among others, for triangulation; for the youth of today it has become an accepted area within which . . . (Who, after all, has seen a buddhist drama, or read a yogi novel?) It is, of course, very difficult to say who exactly is responsible for this, who stopped Kafka being a

paranoiac and launched him as a searcher for grace. Similarly, if enough people make and sell keys to the castle, the public will sooner or later enter; but it is extremely difficult to say at what exact moment they do so. At best we can say that it was at some time during the war. The process itself and its aetiology merit our attention.

A synopsis of the creative Christian literature of the last hundred years would yield evidence for what might be called the principle of *attractive reagency*. When the Church is subjected to any particular criticism, invariably, some little time later, there are those who embrace it, motivated by the subjective invalidity of this very criticism.

'Thou hast conquered O Pale Galilean and the world has grown grey with thy breath,' wrote Swinburne; Huysmans, Rolfe, Wilde, Maeterlinck promptly joined the Church, enticed by its resplendent colour, the chrusoprase and the tyrianth. 'Meanwhile' (wrote Rolfe), 'I will go and have a Turkish bath, and buy a Roman collar.' Theirs was the approach through incense, their fathers had left because of a stale smell. Then it began to be said that Christianity was not very healthy (nor is this surprising when you consider the above list of converts), so, following the principle of attractive reagency, Belloc and Chesterton represented it as one long and rather well-bred muscular bean-feast, with salvation reached by way of Beachy Head and a swordstick. Just a little later you could buy a course in slavonic idiorythms; as Mr. V. S. Pritchett has recently said in *The Living Novel*—'the kind of salvation Dostoevski appeared to urge was not as private as it seemed to his adorers twenty years ago; he did not offer a personal salvation in the form of a semi-religious psycho-analysis.' Yet, I imagine, people thought he did, partly at any rate, in reaction to the rollicksomeness of Belloc and his friends. But by nineteen hundred and thirty-eight it was 'no go the yogiman, no go Blavatsky', and there begins to arise the literature with which this article is concerned.

It would have been absurd to call Belloc or Baring representative, and Chesterton was a very stray genius indeed, whose significance is still wildly underestimated. The difference, after all, between Hilaire Belloc and Dr. Arnold is not very great; both believed in cold baths and sports . . .

'But Catholic men that live upon wine
Are *deep in the water* and frank and fine
Wherever I travel I find it so
Benedicamus Domino.'

(It was Chesterton who prescribed Hot Water for cleanliness' sake.) Inasmuch as the authors we have mentioned do not occupy a position within the main current of English literature, our grandiloquent principle of attractive reagency has dealt only with inessentials. The Oxford Movement said nothing of science, which conditioned the intellectual climate of its day; Chesterton was called the 'philosopher of topsy-turvydom', which conveniently allowed everyone to disregard the philosophy; and Dostoevski, we have seen it argued, was completely misunderstood.

It must, I think, be granted that 'modern Christian literature' means more than that a few talented writers happen to be Christians; and our examples do have some use; you can argue backwards and wonder what attack, what sort of attack on the Church is responsible for 'modern Christian literature' and this in turn will form a virtuous circle and enable a better assessment of what it actually is.

Mr. Evelyn Waugh's new book *Helena* is a very good, almost too good a, starting-point. When he is not saying such curious things as 'the saddle-tree solaced her man-made hurt', he is quite indubitably saying that the True Cross really exists, that the historical basis of Christianity is entirely accurate.

So let us, with some foreboding, state our hypothesis. There is in England at the present time a whole barrage of Christian literature, whose approach is predominantly intellectual; for the last century a cumulative attack has been directed against the Church on the simple ground that its tenets are not true; Christian literature jubilates its defence on the equally simple ground that they are. Moreover, there has, concurrently, been a reaffirmation of Swinburne's aesthetic indictment, in its fundamental form, that Christian values are constrictive of human dignity, to which, and this is particularly the case in fiction, 'modern Christian

literature' replies that allegiance to these values is not only necessary but enhances rather than denigrates humanity.

The intellectual attack, century-long, was fought under different generals, but the time which separates Manzoni from T. S. Eliot may rightly be called the war of Atheist Humanism. The assailants were at different times commanded by Feuerbach, Darwin, the biblical critics, Marx (and later, of course, Spencer), Comte, Fraser and a host of others; a curiously heterogeneous enlistment, specialists varied in their tactics, but all strategically allied in impugning the philosophical or factual foundations of Christianity, and extolling the virtues of the microscope as a weapon.

They were all convinced that there was not a shred of truth in the Christian myth, and having the good of mankind at heart, attempted variously to increase and implement its common knowledge, and so to liberate it once and for all from a bondage whose radical cause they discovered in fear, poverty, ignorance, and superstition. From the Christian point of view, they, each and every one, disregarded the doctrine of original sin; their faith in the ultimate and happy resolution of the human predicament was as unbounded, though tempered it may have been with more detailed knowledge, as the shallow optimism of Leibniz's more popular followers. They believed in absolute truth and this truth contradictory to Christian teaching. Whether mankind was forcibly (albeit inevitably) to be elevated into independence by a change imposed from without, whose instigators abrogated infallibility, or slowly disillusioned of its prejudice and so reach the positive stage of knowledge is of little import. It is, however, a strange thing that of the many supposed reasons for the continued existence of the Christian Religion, poverty alone is investigated in the literature inspired by these thinkers. This literature can therefore be generically designated as sociological—starting from a philosophical position which tended to disregard feelings such as pity or compassion, it built its whole structure on these very foundations. For while Voltaire had engaged battle in the name of Justice, Marx engaged justice as a very junior subordinate; and this has almost without exception been forgotten by his literary adherents.

There is another division—commanded, this one, by Nietzsche—whose adjutant is Freud, although the latter can equally well serve other generals. They preach a wayward dynamic, a triumphal *cacoethes*; their revolt is aesthetic rather than intellectual; they are in direct contraposition to their allies; they are Swinburne gone all serious. For them mankind was wizened, and they proclaimed a renaissance of Dionysus, the bullfight, the stallion and the cothornos. Occasionally they joined forces with the sociologists; Mayakovsky is a good example . . .

'A people is born,
A people of today,
Gentler and better than God himself.'

It may be argued that Freud's work falls more easily into the other category: those who would liberate man by knowledge; this is perhaps true, but his influence on literature seems rather to have extolled the disease than the cure. There is a certain grandeur in being psychopathic; the possibility of a persecution complex has goaded many an unwary soul into wilder and wilder statements of self-pity. So that, while his science diminished for the philosopher the rôle played by free-will in human action, for the layman its impact seemed rather to justify and, by so doing, to encourage, unbridled manifestations of this very force. He was responsible for the negro chauffeur and the heroine tabatiere of the twenties, and can thus be classed with Nietzsche who sang under a far nobler guise the paean of revolt. Rousseau had thought of the primitive as highly civilised; Freudians gleefully discovered that the civilised was highly primitive, and Nietzsche was there to demand that it be made more so.

It has been emphasised that this bifurcated war was different in kind from anything that preceded it; it was total warfare and the important generals were totalitarians. The Christian answer on the principle of attractive reagency is necessarily twofold, and I argue that just as Wilde followed Swinburne, so Graham Greene follows D. H. Lawrence, and T. S. Eliot has followed Bernard Shaw.

Spiritually, after a hundred years of continence or solicited libertinage, there has come a modicum of normal emotion. In the same way as Negro Sculpture, Surrealism, Jazz, Freud and Lawrence form a whole, in the same way as Functionalism, the poets of the thirties, Wells, Shaw, Fraser and Eliot under him form a whole, so, too, Dostoevski and all modern Christian literature forms a whole; and if the present period in English literature is to be remembered, it will be for this whole.

So far this article has sounded almost Russianly glib. Ho! Ho! you will say, someone's been reading books. Or Ho! Ho! and this with greater perspicacity, someone hasn't. Let us then deal first with those who embrace Christianity precisely because it alone is not constrictive of human dignity, those who stand after and opposed to D. H. Lawrence, and the Hemingway school of fiction. In the words of G. K. Chesterton, written in *A Defence of Rash Vows* in 1901: 'The one hell which imagination must conceive as most hellish is to be eternally acting a play without even the narrowest and dirtiest greenroom in which to be human. And this is the condition of the decadent, of the esthete, of the free-lover. To be everlastingly passing through dangers which we know cannot scathe us, to be taking oaths which we know cannot bind us, to be defying enemies who we know cannot conquer us—this is the grinning tyranny of decadence which is called freedom.' It is the world of Ivan Karamzov in its artistic implications and describes the boredom engendered by this century's (sociological and) psychological fiction once it could no longer shock. For while there exists the dichotomy we have defined, in effect both categories of assailant denied the possibility of sin; whether, the one, by proclaiming it nonexistent, or, the other, by trumpeting some of it noble, and ridiculing some virtue weak. There are no roses and raptures if there is no vice—and a great part of modern Christian literature is an assertion of *felix culpa*, that without the possibility of sin, in an Euclidian Crystal palace, mankind ceases to exist. Graham Greene prefixed a quotation from Peguy to his novel *The Heart of the Matter*: *le pécheur est au coeur même de chrétiente*. Cynically, you might say that, in a clinical world, Christians have far more interesting diseases, happily incurable either by social administration or by psycho-analysis, the one of which in England has done all the curing it is likely to do and the other of which is unlikely to do any of the curing it has not done. Psychological literature should of course eradicate itself by therapy; it has done nothing of the sort; it has merely become devoid of all interest; Peter, the hero of Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure*, refuses to have his guilt-complex exorcised and the book is readable, or in the words of Mr. T. S. Eliot:

'Our only health is the disease
If we obey the dying nurse
Whose constant care is not to please
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
And that, to be restored, our sickness
must grow worse.'

Bernanos began to be translated during the war; Jouhandeau is beginning to appear in England; a film was made of *The Power and the Glory*; Maurice is a best-seller. The romantic literature of revolt against convention or what-you-will, of glory in the primitive urges, has worn itself out. After thirty years all the blood has dried on all the sand. It has been discovered that no revolt is really satisfying, no persecution really dreadful, unless there is something real to revolt against, some unimaginary persecutor, and that this reality, this agent, must be God. By annihilating the tyrant, the 'realism' of this century has annihilated the revolt.

Now remains our second counter-proposition: those authors who have embraced Christianity for a primarily intellectual reason. This argument must follow two lines: both the negative one that the atheist humanist attack has so abated in vigour as to be unrecognisable:

'It did not last: the devil howling "Ho.
Let Einstein be", restored the status quo.'

and the positive one that there has been a full reversal of Msgr. Knox's famous couplet:

'When suave politeness temp'ring bigot
zeal
Changed I believe to one must surely
feel.'

The uncertainty of science, its increasing unwillingness to give totalitarian answers to human problems, was first publicised in the early nineteen-twenties. It was found that a hierarchy of organisational levels of existence had to be propounded; Dr. Jung was extremely kind about religion; primitive tribes were not really polytheistic; Christianity seemed to have helped rather than hindered Progress; why, after all, should the communal unconscious be a pack of lies, etc., etc? In 1941 the *New Statesman* published an article on the death of Fraser; in it H. N. Brailsford wrote: 'He did for our time what Lucretius did for his; he emancipated us from the most crushing form of fear. As the sense of oppression lifted, our indignation and our partisan resentments vanished also. In Fraser's words, we could feel "the tender charm of the idols which our poor human species had so long cherished as gods".' In 1951 it is unlikely that even the *New Statesman* would print that particular quotation with so much smugness. It has been seen that to all intents and purposes Marx does not work; seen that Freud really meant 'We would be glad to trace artistic activity back to its instinctual origins—but that is just the point where our means let us down . . .' No one of the present generation really believes that Pope was a poet because he was a hunchback and a Roman Catholic. There have been, said Screwtape, sad cases among the modern physicists. All this merely explains the renewed interest in the late thirties in esoteric spirituality; from the literary standpoint sociological literature was found to descend if there is no peak left from where it might condescend, and in present-day England, where justice is dealt out with a slide-rule, such writing becomes second-class mathematics. Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, the diary of a Grand Inquisitor, showed us the twilight of the Gods, and in England their renaissance is most improbable. It is interesting to note that while Christian Literature has come with a sort of explosion in England, this is not so in countries where social problems still remain entirely or partially unresolved. In Italy there is no corresponding movement; Prattolini, Malaparte, Moravia, are primarily interested in maladjustment, cruelty, injustice and their effects. In France there has always been a Christian tradition; while Gide wrote volumes on the importance of being frank, there were Claudel and Du Bos and Riviere to say it did rather matter what you were frank about. And existentialism, not Christianity, has been produced by reaction to the sociologists

On the positive side of our argument there is, above all, the figure of T. S. Eliot, whose reiterated belief in the Christian tradition has had enormous influence. There is C. S. Lewis who has reawakened interest in Christian theology for the layman, as has done Charles Williams for the intellectual. There is the revival of scholasticism under Jacques Maritain. Christianity is no longer on the defensive; credos are definitely in fashion, for although of chi-chi or muscularity or mysticism the Church seemed to say: 'Oh, yes, we've got that too', when the argument is about truth, the Church states its own unique claim to this property.

Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli, wrote Terentian the Moor: the fate of books depends on the capacity of the reader. Twenty years ago it was great fun for the high-brows to say how easily intelligible T. S. Eliot was; the success of the *Cocktail Party* gave them a nasty shock; other people thought so too. And more particularly the youth of today is at home in a Christian *Weltanschauung*; to assess the total effect of the Christian Broadside for the generation which is now coming of age is properly a matter of statistics, and as no one of this generation has yet written anything approaching the readable, the books would have to be cooked desiccate.

THE STRANGE CASE OF PÈRE UBU

P. M. FITZGERALD

ALFRED JARRY lived from 1873 to 1907, and was a microcosm of a legendary period. He was 'so *this* and so *that*'—so ninetyish in his satanism, his obscenity, his irony, his artificially flowering style, his slavery to absinthe, his blasphemy, his deathbed repentance—so French in his passion for bicycling and *pêche à la ligne* and his carefulness in matters of money, even when he had none—more Bohemian than the Bohemians in his ramshackle domestic arrangements (his garret was so low that, small though he was, his hair brushed the ceiling and was always dusty with plaster). It will be found on close examination that most of the good stories, eccentricities and wheezes of that great time originated with Jarry. It was he, for instance, who hit on the notion of attending functions where evening dress was required in a paper shirt with a tie drawn on it in ink; and, on a deeper level, his poetic prose contains hints of nearly all the images which became later on the common property of surrealism—melting watches, animated corpses, wide expanses of desert with tiny figures, 'trees inside the house', weeping eyes, the foetus, the Tour Eiffel, &c. In two of his works, moreover, he showed an originality which is frightening in its clairvoyance. These two works are his novel, *Le Surmâle*, and his celebrated drama *Ubu Roi*.

The original version of this play was written in 1888 when Jarry was a schoolboy of fifteen at the Lycée de Rennes. It was simply an addition to a huge saga of the classroom which revolved around the unfortunate M. Hébert, a teacher of physics. M. Hébert, who was doomed to be found excruciatingly funny by generation after generation of boys, appeared in this sketch as *le Père Hébé*, and was the embodiment of clumsiness and stupidity. The piece itself was called *Les Polonais* and was put on by a marionette theatre run by one of the boys.

The first edition of *Ubu Roi* itself appeared eight years later, in the June of 1896. It was performed, once again, by marionettes, at the Théâtre des Pantins run by the musician Claude Terrasse in a deserted studio. Terrasse had written the incidental music for the play (which should, properly speaking, have called for a brass band, including gongs, and a steam organ from the fairground), and the evening was a great success. It was, however, only a private affair, and the real première took place on the 10th of December 1896, when Lugné-Poe accepted the play and put it on for a short run at the Théâtre l'Oeuvre.

At the beginning of the performance Jarry appeared before the curtain and, in a voice choked with nervousness, delivered a speech of apology. Having glanced at the symbolism of Père Ubu's shape (an almost perfect sphere), which could be interpreted either as the most rudimentary or as the most advanced organism, he made a long apology for the music, the costumes, and the cuts in the text, adding, however, that no fault could be found with the scenery, since the spectators could easily imagine 'doors opening on plains of snow and melting roads adorned with clocks.' He added that the actors were to be regarded as marionettes: only practical difficulties had prevented their being hung on strings, and they had all sat up half the night painting cardboard horses for the battle scenes.

This speech did not 'go down' with the audience who were, in consequence, ill prepared for what was to follow. The curtain rose and revealed Gémier dressed as far as possible[1] as the figure of Jarry's imagination, a huge, bloated, almost spherical figure tapering to a *poire* which

[1] His mask was not ready for the first night

was, in fact, pear-shaped, with slits for eyes and wrapped round and round with something resembling grave-clothes or the linen bandages of a mummy. The appearance has been compared by Wilenski to the figure in the foreground in Ensor's 'Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889'. The sketches, in any case, and even the models of the masks, had been made by Jarry himself. Ubu was 'discovered' talking to his wife, and his opening speech, delivered in a loud, metallic, strongly accented voice, was the famous 'Merdre'.

This word, so usual everywhere but in polite society and on the stage, and given an indescribably sinister emphasis by the extra 'r', caused half the theatre to rise to their feet, and although most of the critics must have known what was coming, the rest of the performance took place among deafening *mouvements diverses*. The *Mercure de France* group were all on Jarry's side, though perhaps the only people who really enjoyed the performance were Courteline and Tristan Bernard, both helpless with laughter. For ten minutes or so Gémier could not make himself heard at all, and was reduced to dancing a jig. Hérold, who was working the lights, added to the confusion by turning them on and off so that the whole theatre was from time to time in complete darkness. At the end, out of the many famous comments made, the most revealing, surely, was Jules Lemaître's—'It *is* meant to be a joke, isn't it?'

The play developed as a kind of grotesque parody of Shakespearean tragedies (those who objected were shouted down with 'You don't understand Shakespeare either!'). Ubu is 'tempted' by his wife to aspire to the throne of Poland and, assisted by Capitaine Bordure (who is proportionately tall and lean), he arranges to assassinate King Wenceslas—giving a truly 'Ubuesque' signal to attack by stamping on the King's foot. After a period in power not unlike Macbeth's, during which the peasants are ground down and the aristocracy are murdered en masse, he is ousted by the rightful heir, Prince Bougrelas, takes refuge in a cave where he is nearly eaten by a bear, and is last seen escaping on shipboard '*au plus près sur la Baltique*'. But everything in the play that is heavy, schoolboyish, charade-like and coarse, is given an odd significance by a surrealist treatment which is the hallmark of Jarry's *humour noir*. A famous instance is the moment when Ubu, who has been called up for congratulation by the unsuspecting King, hands him a penny whistle. Or there is Ubu's strange equipment, the *croc à merdre* (dunghook), the *baton à physique* (medicine stick), the *pistolet à phynances* (phinancial pistol), the long dogskin cloak, the little piece of wood for putting into people's ears and noses, to which he adds, during the period of his reverses, the carcase of the dead bear. The language of the play, too, must have been enough to drive a dramatic critic into a frenzy, for the flattest and crudest conversation, not 'racy' or 'earthy' at all, but simply vulgar, abounds in subtleties, not witty certainly, for Jarry had put all his wit aside for this supreme moment, but indescribably telling.

'Mère Ubu, you are looking particularly ugly this evening. Is it because we are expecting guests?'

'Chacun son tour d'être mangé.'

* * *

Ubu is, as Jarry put it, '*gros de satiriques symboles*'.

I should like to consider, in these notes, exactly what Ubu represented or foreshadowed, and also the effect which he had upon his author, an effect which became, in time, one of the strangest pathological cases in the history of letters.

An obvious clue is contained in Jarry's letter to Lugné-Poe, the manager of the Théâtre l'Oeuvre, asking for formal masks and scenery, '*tous détails qui étaient dans l'esprit de la pièce, puisque j'ai voulu faire un guignol.*' Ubu was originally a marionette. His powers of survival and revival under difficulties are inherited from Punch, and children who are frightened of Punch and Judy are surely right, as was the late M. R. James in his *Story of An Appearance and a Disappearance*, where Punch suddenly snickers and looks down at his shoes, which are seen to be dabbled in blood. Punch, however, is astute. He has always a trick or two up his sleeve. Ubu is monumental in his stupidity and it is there that his significance lies.

Humanity has, through long practice, become very clever at ignoring anything which makes it feel uncomfortable or draws attention to its ferocious stupidity. Symbols which it cannot ignore it will weaken or misinterpret if it can. So Frankenstein's monster (which, in the original, was made out of 'spare parts' from the graveyard) is turned into an absurd affair of creaking joints and wheels, and the austere Don Quixote dwindles into a lovable, semi-idiotic old dear. Among critics, there has been a kind of conspiracy to regard Père Ubu as a symbol of authority run riot: *l'Etat lui-méme et son administration* (an idea which was perpetuated by Gustave Terry with his civil servant, M. Ubureau). I heard this interpretation repeated on the Third Programme a few weeks ago, while a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 1 December called Ubu 'an archetype of "common, perplexed man".' (Ubu, who serves up banquets of dung, eats chickens whole, and massacres by the thousand.) I need hardly say that there is nothing whatever in the play to justify these feeble ideas, for if there is one thing Ubu does not possess, it is a shadow of authority of any kind. His system does not require it. *J'aurai vite fait fortune, alors je tuerai tout le monde et je m'en irai.* If difficulties arise, he has recourse to the mysterious *baton à physique*. It is true that in the end he is unsuccessful. But it is not the result of bad government, but of force pure and simple.

What is wrong with Don Quixote and Frankenstein and Père Ubu? Why do we sentimentalise them, and arrange them so as to look so much nicer? It is because they satirise not our faults—criticism of this kind is so familiar that we can be broad-minded and overlook it—but (most unacceptably) our ideas of progress and everything that we feel is a subject for congratulation. In the case of Ubu, the truth is this: that Jarry, who had more than something about him of a prophet conjured up in this child of his brain a vast and unpleasing vision of the future. Ubu is a cloudy 'type' of the coming century, not of the common man, but of what commonness will come to if we bow down and worship it. This is grasped more easily if you look at Ubu as the reverse side of his contemporary, Wells's little man. Although Wells was careful to point out that the new forces being released by science would end in disaster, he could not repress his sense of the glory of it ('Golly!') and an immense elation in the power of throwing a switch which would turn the humbly-paid mechanic into a god. His stories in fact abound in all kinds of devices by which humbly-paid people do become gods, though usually only for a short time. Jarry, also, was fascinated with new ideas, talking calmly of war in the air, of moving staircases, and of his own very individual branch of science, *la pataphysique*. His *Surmâle* (a satiric romance with the touch of genius) has the thesis that *les forces humaines sont illimitées*, so that the supermale, a nightmare racing bicyclist, triumphs even over the love machine which has been constructed in the laboratory, but comes, in the end, to dote on him.[1] Jarry, then, was as fascinated as Wells as he peered at the technocratic age to come. But he was not taken in. He did not perceive a disarming young scientist or a shopkeeper unable to make ends meet, revelling in a new vision of freedom.

He saw a terrifyingly vulgar individual gaining power by treachery and the crudest possible schemes, turning government into a nightmare, enriching himself through the simple device of pushing his opponents through a trapdoor, and finally, acting on the advice of dubious advisers, entering upon a war in which he appears hung with scientific amulets. Who can say that, having survived so far, they have had not more than one chance to recognise the portrait? Whatever it is, it is not a satire on bureaucracy. But we must not mistake it, either, for a mere foreshadowing (however accurate) of various régimes which we have seen, or hope soon to see, collapse. It is the incarnation of the shapeless power which trusts those régimes and puts them into being, whose god is the 'wonders of science', whose pride lies in being ordinary folk, and whose prayer is to be spared from thinking.

* * *

The effect of Père Ubu on Jarry himself has been traced by Paul Chauveau in his *La Naissance, La Vie et La Mort de Père*

[1] One of Jarry's remarkable inventions in this book is a racing bicycle for five—the fifth man has died *en route* but is just as useful as before for his feet, tied to the pedals, act as a regulator

Ubu. It was, in brief, a case of impersonation which turned into one of complete possession.

Through the whole of his life, Ubu, in one form or another had been Jarry's 'demon'. He started, as we know, as a schoolboy joke (and *Ubu Roi* is I think the only classic which preserves some of that hysterical laughter, always on the verge of retiring to the bathroom to be sick, which everyone who has been fifteen can just remember). But once conjured up, he remained for ever materialised, just within call, and growing more real with every passing year. He appears for the first time as Ubu in the *Minutes de Sable Mémorial*, a collection of 'black', satanic and surrealist pieces which Jarry published in 1894. Two years later *Ubu Roi* itself was produced as a puppet play. It was after this that Jarry, emboldened by success, began to 'do' Ubu as a kind of social turn, which frequently ended, however, in his becoming excited and out of hand and being requested to leave.

This turn consisted of an impersonation which spared no one. To *act* like Père Ubu however, as he was first created, Jarry would have had to be cruel, cowardly, and stupid, and since his was in fact a delicate nature (he was scrupulous in money matters and never called on a family without some toys for the children), the change was bound to be violent. He confined it at first to words—to shocking rudenesses at table, strange lectures where his listeners were dazed rather than instructed, and the characteristic Ubuesque diction. This was harsh, measured and pompous, with widely-separated syllables and the significant pauses of the old tragedian. Ubu, of course, used only the royal 'we' and a mixture of 'classic' phrases ('we shall take that which propels itself' for 'a train') with slang of the simplest kind. ('B—— taste' was his contribution to a discussion of taste in literature.) Later, rather than the cruelties, he developed the surrealist side of Père Ubu's activities, flying along barefoot on his bicycle in the pouring rain, keeping owls in his room (but very late one night he shot them all), dipping his sugar in red ink, &c., &c. The audience, always a most important consideration in this kind of thing, consisted of his neighbours, the customers in his favourite cafés, and his friends who understood and loved him for what was, to the end, his lovableness.

It was during this early period of his short life that Jarry, or Ubu, launched his most extravagant joke, the 'discovery' of the Douanier Rousseau. (It was Jarry who created Rousseau a Douanier and quite certainly he did not recognise him as a great painter.) At this time, also, he acquired his beloved boat-house, or fishing hut, near Corbeil, where he slept with his bicycle hung from the ceiling so that the rats would not gnaw away the tyres. But Jarry had always loved to be shocking, and these things might have passed as a gigantic joke, and as a practical expression of that drift to the irrational which he so well understood. He was, after all, only living up to his reputation, and delighted in turning up unexpectedly from time to time in a correct black suit and behaving unimpeachably. It was only after the production at the Thèâtre l'Oeuvre that the situation seems to have changed and his friends detected signs that he was not altogether in control of his impersonation. André Salmon has described an occasion in 1903 when Jarry presided at a meeting of *La Plume*. He was, at this time, just running to fat and his best clothes included a black silk shirt (to save washing), a tight redingote and a purple cravat. Over these he wore Ubu's long overcoat and a crook-handled umbrella to represent the *croc à phynances*. Another member of the circle describes the effect when Jarry 'turned on his high spirits like a tap and appeared to follow the wild dance of his words instead of controlling them. It wasn't a human being talking any longer, but a machine possessed by some demon. His jerky voice, sometimes metallic, sometimes high and nasal, his short stiff gestures like a jointed ventriloquist's doll, his mask-like fixed expression, his grotesque and brilliant fancies . . . it was all astonishing and amusing at first, then irritating and, in the end, frightening.'

The affair had, now, all the characteristics of a joke that has got out of hand, and two symptoms of it in particular should have been a warning. In the first place, Jarry's literary output declined (it had

always been remarkable, a kind of inconvenient justification of the Bohemian drunkard's life) though, to the end, he continued to produce 'sayings' and new exploits of Père Ubu. He struggled slowly and painfully with his notes and translations as though, always, the shadow of some heavy personage at his elbow were falling across his work. Secondly, he complained from time to time of the dominance of Ubu—of being known always as the author of *Ubu Roi*. He felt he had it in him to be a poet not inferior to Rimbaud. Only the fate which he himself had whistled up pursued him relentlessly. In an age of amateur satanists, he alone had succeeded, and too well.

It must be remembered that this was not a matter of dramatising one's own self in one's writings, like Byron or Oscar Wilde, and being condemned, as a result, to live a tedious life *en caractère*. Nor was Jarry like 'Monk' Lewis, or like Henry Monnier, the author of the *Memoirs de Joseph Prudhomme*, who dressed and talked like the heroes of their novels—both these were simply acting on a healthy love of notoriety. This, beyond doubt, had been Jarry's motive at first, but it was equally clear that the step had now been taken across the frail boundaries of the abnormal.

Not that he had, so to speak, any pretensions to insanity. Many of the symbolists had, but Jarry, to the end, remained obstinately in command of his senses. To lose them, he had to take the necessary quantity of alcohol (he drank two bottles of white wine when he got up and then wine and absinthe alternately throughout the entire day)—and even then he was scarcely ever really drunk. Once, however, the glow of the alcohol had crept through his ailing body (he was already an advanced case of tuberculosis), he felt himself in the vein, he 'became' Ubu. It was, in fact, no longer a case of impersonation, but of possession.

Meanwhile, his exploits grew more extravagant and even dangerous. His necrophilic fantasies increased, and he exhibited one day to Félix Fénéon, who had come to visit him at his boat-house near Corbeil, a corpse which he had fished up out of the river more than three days before.

In the year 1906 his whole condition began to deteriorate. He now drank steadily and had reached the point where he no longer felt the necessity for food, which in any case, he could hardly ever afford. Then alcohol began not to produce the required effect and he took to ether. At the age of thirty-three, he was mortally poisoned, while from his lips poured a stream of insults in the metallic tones of Ubu. His friends, inured to so much, became alarmed. All of them agreed that at this time he appeared like a man goaded and driven on by an incubus or monstrous obsession. He had begun to fire off his revolvers in the street and to smash the mirrors in restaurants (as he said, 'to break the ice'). In the end the most loyal friend of all, Dr. Jean Saltas, persuaded him to try a rest cure in his native town of Laval, in Brittany.

At Laval, Jarry was deprived, at a stroke, of drink, drugs, and the insidious atmosphere of the streets and cafés. His sister nursed him and he spent much of his time in bed. A strange thing happened. In the depths of his depression, the whole mighty phantasmagoria of Ubu deserted him and he became, once again, a Breton, well brought up in a religious household, whose father (as he often pointed out) *était un bougre dénué d'importance, ce qu'on appelle un bien brave homme*. He asked for a priest, made his confession, and received extreme unction. The next day he wrote his famous letter to Madame Rachilde. (It is dated the 28th of May 1906.)

'This time Père Ubu is writing to you in a sober condition (this letter begins like a will, however I've made one). I think you will have understood by this time that he isn't dying (forgive the stupid word) of drink or any other excesses.

'That wasn't his failing and he has had the vanity to get the doctors (*merdecins*) to examine him. No disease of the liver or the heart or the kidneys or even the urine. He is, quite simply, worn out; rather a queer end for someone who once wrote the *Surmâle*, just to snuff out, instead of exploding. He is just going to come gently to a standstill, like an engine conking out. And no cure on earth, however strictly he may follow it (and laugh at it secretly all the time) will save him now . . . Two days

ago he received the Extreme Unction of Our Lord and, like Kipling's elephant, he is "full of an insatiable curiosity." He is going to go a little further backward into the darkness of time . . . Note that, if he *doesn't* die, it will seem quite ridiculous to have written all this . . . but we repeat that all this is written being of sober mind. He has left such beautiful things behind him on earth, but he is making such a grand finale! . . . (A detail: please ask Vallette to deduct in advance something out of the subscriptions (if there is anything left) for ——, so that I shall be able to bequeath my portrait to you; my other legacy is the *Tripode*, whatever will my sister do with it? All this, of course, only after any money outstanding on *Pantagruel*, or anything else has been collected) . . .

'Père Ubu has shaved himself, and got himself a clean shirt, a purple one as it happens. He will *cast off from the shore*, eaten up, as always, by an insatiable curiosity. His intuition tells him that it will be at five o'clock this afternoon . . . if he is wrong he will look ridiculous, ghosts are always ridiculous.

'Afterwards Père Ubu, who has earned his repose, will try to get some sleep. He believes that the brain, during the process of decomposition, continues to function after death and that its dreams are what makes Paradise. Assuming this is so, Père Ubu—he would like so very much to see the *Tripode* again!—may, perhaps, be going to sleep for ever.

Alfred Jarry.

'I am opening my letter. The doctor has just come and thinks he can pull me through.'

It is a truly human document, 'Ubuesque' only in the last echoes of the name, full of touching affection and the desire (which you may call bourgeois if you like) not to appear ridiculous, and to die respectably. Yet the 'mourners' at Jarry's funeral laughed and talked and afterwards went off defiantly to a noisy restaurant, to honour (as they thought) the man who was without human feelings.

After writing the letter, Jarry did recover, or thought he had, and one morning Dr. Saltas, sitting in his rooms in Paris, was amazed to see his friend walk in through the door. It was Jarry with all his old charm of manner restored, but he diagnosed at once from his appearance a new and a most significant change. Jarry showed him a photograph of himself, in a fencing outfit taken some years before (as Saltas knew perfectly well) and insisted on pretending that it was quite recent. 'The truth, which he was vainly trying to hide, was that his eyes and his face had lost all the vivacity of expression which had been so characteristic of him, as well as the cruel, convulsive smile which transformed his face so rapidly from the serious to the comic and often gave him something of the look of a Japanese mask.' His whole appearance was that of a man exhausted. He seemed to have passed through a fever which had left him in the last stages of weakness.

In fact the doctor's cure had been only too successful. Jarry had cut the cord. He was rid of the monstrous incubus which he had conjured up, but the evil spirit in departing had mortally injured its unfortunate creator. Before the very eyes of the many who loved him, he grew weaker day by day. His state was compared to a man whose blood is being sucked away by a vampire. He was polite, considerate, normal, and entirely 'empty'. One morning his friends (who were worried at not having seen him the night before in the cafés which he still haunted), went round to his rooms and found him stretched out on his mattress, unable to move or speak, and paralysed in both legs. He did not seem to know what was wrong with him. He lay like the Sybil who has ceased to prophesy, or the doll whose sawdust has run out. He was removed to the Hôpital de la Charité.

Dr. Saltas was accustomed to visit him every day and ask him if he wanted anything. One morning the eyes of the dying man lit up.

'Yes, there is something which I should like very much indeed.'

'I will get it for you immediately. What is it?'

'A toothpick'.

Saltas fetched a packet of toothpicks and Jarry took one between his finger and thumb. He sighed deeply and his whole face expressed the greatest relief. A few moments later he died.

[1] Jarry's *Pantagruel* was the libretto of an opera which he had edited for Claude Terrasse

Ensor — *Entry of Christ into Brussels* — *Gravure à l'eau forte 1898*

SCENES FROM
UBU ROI
A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS BY ALFRED JARRY

[*Translator's Note*—I have left certain words and phrases in French because there is no equivalent for their flavour and because I believe they will be readily understood by anyone interested enough in Jarry to read further. *Bougre* is a great deal milder in French than it is in English. *Merde* means dung, but has no equivalent, nor, to my mind, have *monsieur*, *sauve qui peut*, *chacun à son gout*, or some of the comic swear words. I have chosen scenes from the first four Acts of the play which I hope will show:

1. the parody, not of Shakespeare's style, but of his method of conducting his tragedies—although Jarry was a lover of English literature, *Ubu Roi* shows unmistakable traces of old-fashioned school texts of Shakespeare. ('Monsieur Macbeth! Monsieur Macbeth! Prenez garde à Monsieur Macduff!')

2. the marionette, Punch-and-Judy-like atmosphere, particularly in the comic 'cowardice' scenes (the armies, by the way, were represented by one man with a cardboard horse).

3. the surrealist elements.

4. the character of the hero—(it should be particularly noted that he is hated by his own followers and despised by those who put him into power).

ACT I
Scene 1
PÈRE UBU, MÈRE UBU

PÈRE UBU: *Merdre*!

MÈRE UBU: That's a nice thing to say, Père Ubu, you're a bad lot.

P.U.: Mère Ubu, why do I not do you in?

M.U.: It is not I, Père Ubu, but another who must be put to death!

P.U.: By my great green candle, I don't follow you.

M.U.: What, Père Ubu, do you mean you are satisfied with your position in life!

P.U.: By my great green candle, *merdre*, madame. certainly, yes, I *am* satisfied. One might indeed be satisfied with less; captain of dragoons, personal Attaché to King Wenceslas, decorated with the order of the Red Eagle of Poland and ex-King of Aragon. What more do you want, eh?

M.U.: What? After having been King of Aragon you're content to appear at a Review with fifty miserable men, equipped with carving knives, when you might place upon your napper the crown of Poland in succession to that of Aragon?

P.U.: Ah! Mère Ubu, I don't know what you're talking about.

M.U.: You're so stupid!

P.U.: By my great green candle, King Wenceslas is just as alive as ever he was; and even supposing he dies, hasn't he got legions of children?

M.U.: What is there to stop you massacring the entire family and putting yourself in their place?

P.U.: Ah! Mère Ubu, you insult me and I shall rapidly knock your block off.

M.U.: Ah, you poor unfortunate, if my block is knocked off, who will mend the seat of your pants?

P.U.: Well, what about it? Haven't I a breech just like everyone else's?

M.U.: In your place I would install that breech upon a throne. You might augment your riches beyond the dreams of avarice, eat black pudding frequently and roll through the streets in a carriage.

P.U.: If I were a king, I would have fashioned for me a great overcoat such as I had in Aragon and was stolen from me by those rascally Spaniards.

M.U.: You might also procure for yourself an umbrella and a great waterproof

cloak which would come right down to the ground.

P.U.: Ah! I yield to temptation. *Bougre de merdre, merdre de bougre*, if ever I meet him in a quiet corner he'll rue the day!

M.U.: Good, good, Père Ubu, now you're talking like a man.

P.U.: Oh, no! I, a captain of dragoons to murder the King of Poland! No, rather die!

M.U.: (*aside*) *Merdre*! (*aloud*) So you're going to stay stuck like a rat in a trap, Père Ubu?

P.U.: *Ventrebleu*, by my great green candle, I would rather be stuck like a thin and noble rat than enrich myself like a fat and wicked cat.

M.U.: And the overcoat! and the umbrella? and the large waterproof cloak?

P.U.: Well, what about them, Mère Ubu? (*He goes out slamming the door.*)

M.U.: Pouf, *merdre*, he was heavy going, but pouf, *merdre*, I think I've talked him round all the same. Thanks to God and my own efforts, in eight days I may, perhaps, be Queen of Poland.

Scene 2

The scene represents a room in Père Ubu's house where a splendid repast is laid out.

M.U.: Well, our guests are very late.

P.U.: Yes, by my great green candle, and I'm dying of hunger. Madame Ubu, you're looking particularly ugly this evening. Is it because we are expecting company?

M.U.: (*shrugging her shoulders*) *Merdre*!

P.U.: (*seizing a roast chicken*) Well, I'm hungry, I'm going to chew a piece out of this bird. It's a chicken, I think. Not bad at all.

M.U.: What are you doing, you wretch? What are our guests going to eat?

P.U.: There'll be plenty left for them. I shan't touch anything else. Mère Ubu, go to the window and see if our guests are arriving.

M.U.: (*going to the window*) I don't see anything. (*During this time Père Ubu secretes a fillet of veal.*) Ah! here is Captain Bordure arriving with his followers. What are you eating now, Père Ubu?

P.U.: Nothing, just a little veal!

M.U.: Ah! the veal! the veal! the veal! he's eaten the veal! help! help!

P.U.: By my great green candle, I'll tear your eyes out.

Scene 3

(*Enter Captain Bordure and his followers*)

M.U.: Good evening, gentlemen, we had looked forward so much to your coming. Pray sit down.

CAPT. BORDURE: Good evening, Madame. But where is Père Ubu?

P.U.: Here I am! here I am! *Sapristi*, by my great green candle, surely I'm big enough.

C.B.: Good evening, Père Ubu. Sit down men. (*They all sit down.*)

P.U.: Ugh, pull it over a bit more, my chair's stuck.

C.B.: Well, Mère Ubu, what good things have you in store for us today?

M.U.: Here is the menu.

P.U.: This touches me nearly.

M.U.: *Soupe polonaise*, ribs of rats meat, chicken, pâté of dog, rump of turkey, charlotte russe . . .

P.U.: That's quite enough for them, I should think. Is there any more?

M.U.: (*continuing to read*) *Bombe*, salad, fruit, dessert, boiled meat, artichokes, cauliflowers in dung . . .

P.U.: Ah, thinkest thou I am an Emperor of the East that you throw money about like this?

M.U.: Don't listen to him, he's cracked.

P.U.: Aha! I'll sharpen my teeth on your calves.

M.U.: You'd better have your dinner instead, Père Ubu. Here is some *soupe à la polonaise*.

P.U.: Bougre, it's filthy!

C.B.: It's not very nice, as a matter of fact.

M.U.: Pair of savages, what more do you want?

P.U. (*tapping his forehead*). Aha! I have an idea! I'll be back in a moment. (*He goes out.*)

M.U.: Gentlemen, we will all try the veal.

C.B.: It's very good, I've finished it.

M.U.: The turkey, then.

CAPT. B.: Exquisite, exquisite. Congratulations, Mère Ubu!

ALL: Congratulations!

PÈRE UBU: (*re-entering*) Before long you'll be shouting congratulations, Père Ubu! (*He holds an indescribably nasty brush in his hand and thrusts it over the banquet.*)

Véritable Portrait de Monsieur Ubu

M.U.: You Wretch, what are you doing?

P.U.: Try some of this!

(*Several of the company fall down poisoned.*)

P.U.: Mère Ubu, pass me the rats' meat cutlets that I may dish out.

M.U.: Here they are.

P.U.: Now, get out, the lot of you. Captain Bordure, a word in your ear.

ALL: But wait—we haven't had dinner!

P.U.: What do you mean, you haven't had dinner? Get out, the lot of you. You stay, Bordure. (*Nobody moves.*) So you're still here! By my great green candle, I'll stun you with chops. (*He begins to hurl them about.*)

ALL: Wow! Help! Protect us! Death and destruction! I'm dying!

P.U.: *Merdre, merdre, merdre*! Clear out! . . . Aha! I've created my little sensation . . .

ALL: Run for your life. Horrible Père Ubu, treacherous and stingy rascal!

P.U.: Well, that's the last of them. I breathe again, but I have had an exceedingly poor dinner. Come, Bordure. (*Exeunt with Mère Ubu.*)

Scene 4

P.U.: Well, Capitaine, did you enjoy your dinner?

C.B.: Very much, sir, except the dung.

P.U.: Come, come, the dung wasn't so bad.

M.U.: *Chacun à son gout.*

P.U.: Captain Bordure, I have decided to make you Duke of Lithuania.

C.B.: Well, I never, Père Ubu, and I thought you were so stingy.

P.U.: Within a few days, if you so desire, I shall reign in Poland.

C.B.: Are you going to kill Wenceslas?

P.U.: He's not so stupid, *le bougre*, he guessed straight away.

C.B.: If it's a matter of killing Wenceslas, I'm willing. I am his mortal enemy and will answer for my men.

P.U.: (*throwing himself upon him and embracing him*) Bordure, I love you.

QUEEN: How can you expect me to stand up to so many cruel strokes? The King murdered, our family wiped out, and you, the last representative of the noblest race that ever carried sword, forced to take refuge in the mountains like a smuggler.

BOUGRELAS: And by whom, God in Heaven, by whom? A coarse Père Ubu, an adventurer from no one knows where! And when I remember that my father decorated him and made him a count, and the next day the villain was shameless enough to lift his hand against him!

QUEEN: O Bougrelas! When I remember how happy we were before the coming of this Père Ubu! But now, alas, everything is changed.

BOUGRELAS: What shall we do? Let us wait in hope and never give up our claims to the throne.

QUEEN: For you I would wish it, dear child. But as for me, I shall never see that happy day.

BOUGRELAS: What is wrong? She looks pale, she is tottering. Help! But there is no one to hear me! O God, her heart no longer beats, she is dead. Can it be possible? Another victim of Père Ubu! (*He hides his face and weeps.*) Oh, my God, what a fate to be left at the age of fourteen years with a terrible revenge which I alone must pursue!

(*He falls into extreme despair. Meanwhile the spirits of Wenceslas, Boleslas, Ladislas and the Queen enter the cave, their Ancestors follow them and fill the entire cave. The oldest ones approuch Bougrelas and gently wake him.*)

Ah! What do I see! My family, my ancestors! What miracle is this?

THE SHADE: Learn, Bougrelas, that in my lifetime I was Matthias of Königsberg, the founder of our House and the first of its Kings. On you I lay the duty of our vengeance. (*He gives him a large sword.*) And let this sword which I give you never be laid aside until it has brought death to the usurper.

(*All disappear and Bougrelas is left alone in an attitude of ecstasy.*)

Scene 6

The King's Palace

PÈRE UBU, MÈRE UBU, CAPITAINE BORDURE

P.U.: No, I won't! Do you want me to ruin myself for these *bouffres*?

C.B.: But Père Ubu, don't you see that the populace is waiting to celebrate the happy event?

M.U.: If you don't hand out food and money you'll be thrown out of here in a couple of hours.

P.U.: Food, yes, but money, no! Kill three old horses, it's quite good enough for such idiots.

M.U.: Idiot yourself! Why am I tied to such a half-witted beast of a man!

P.U.: Once and for all, I want money, and I won't part with a sou.

M.U.: Although you've now laid hold of the entire wealth of Poland.

C.B.: Yes, and I believe there is an immense quantity of treasure in the chapel. Let us distribute that.

P.U.: You wretch, if you dare—

C.B.: But, Père Ubu, if you don't make a distribution, the people may not pay their taxes.

P.U.: Is that so?

M.U.: Yes, yes.

P.U.: Very well then, I agree to everything. Get together three million, and roast fifty sheep and oxen, especially as I also shall partake of them.

(*They go out . . . The sounds of an orgy are heard and it will be kept up till dawn. The curtain falls.*)

ACT III

Scene 1

The Palace

PÈRE UBU, MÈRE UBU

P.U.: By my great green candle, here I am, King of the country; already I'm crippled with indigestion and before long they're going to bring me my great cloak and hood.

M.U.: What material is it made out of, Père Ubu? Even though we are King and Queen, we ought to consider economy.

P.U.: Madame, my female, it is of sheepskin with a clasp and straps of dogskin.

M.U.: Good, but it's better still to be King and Queen.

P.U.: Yes, you were quite right, Mère Ubu.

M.U.: We owe a great deal to the Duke of Lithuania.

P.U.: To whom?

M.U.: Well, I mean to Captain Bordure.

P.U.: For heaven's sake, Mère Ubu, don't mention that *bouffre* to me. Now I don't need him any longer he can bellyache as long as he likes, he won't get any duke-dom from me.

M.U.: You are making a great mistake, Père Ubu, he will turn against you.

P.U.: Much I care for that, poor little man; he doesn't worry me any more than Bougrelas.

M.U.: And do you imagine you've heard the last of Bougrelas?

P.U.: Sabre of finances, of course I have! What do you think he can do to me, a boy of fourteen?

M.U.: Listen, for the last time, I feel in my heart that Bougrelas will win in the end, because his cause is good.

P.U.: Aha! you filth! isn't a bad cause worth just as much as a good one? Mère Ubu, you insult me, I'll chop you into little bits. (*Mère Ubu runs away pursued by Ubu*)

Scene 2

The Great Hall of the Palace

PÈRE UBU, MÈRE UBU, OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS: GIRON, PILE, COTICE, NOBLES IN CHAINS, FINANCIERS, MAGISTRATES, CLERKS

P.U.: Bring the Cash Box of the Nobles and the Hook of the Nobles and the Knife of the Nobles and the Account Book of the Nobles. And now bring forward the Nobles.

(*The Nobles are pushed roughly forward.*)

M.U.: For heaven's sake restrain yourself, Père Ubu.

P.U.: I have the honour to announce to you that in order to increase the wealth of the country I am about to put all the nobles to death and confiscate their property.

NOBLES: Horror! We appeal to the army and the people!

P.U.: Bring forward the first Noble and hand me the Hook of the Nobles. I will pass those who are condemned to death through the trap door; they will fall into the cellars of Nippy-Grippy and into the Hall of Farthings, where their brains will be dashed out. (*To the Noble*) Who are you, *bouffre*?

NOBLE: The Count of Vitebsk.

P.U.: What are your annual revenues?

NOBLE: Three million ruyksdals.

P.U.: Condemned to death! (*He catches him with the hook and pushes him through the trapdoor.*)

M.U.: How cruel he is, and how vulgar!

P.U.: Second Noble, what is your name? (*The Noble does not reply.*) *Bouffre*, are you going to answer me?

NOBLE: The Grand Duke of Posen.

P.U.: Excellent, excellent, that's all I wanted to know. Through the trap-door! Third Noble, who are you? That's a filthy ugly face you have.

NOBLE: Duke of Courlande and of the cities of Riga, Revel and Mitau.

P.U.: Good, very good—and that's all you've got?

NOBLE: It is.

P.U.: Into the trap, then. Fourth Noble, who are you?

NOBLE: Prince of Podolia.

P.U.: What are your revenues?

NOBLE: I am ruined.

P.U.: For that answer you go straight into the trap. Fifth Noble, who are you?

NOBLE: Margrave of Thorn, Palatin of Polock.

P.U.: That isn't much. Haven't you anything else?

NOBLE: I had no desire for more.

P.U.: Oh well! Something's better than nothing! Into the trap. What are you blubbering about, Mère Ubu?

M.U.: You are too fierce, Père Ubu.

P.U.: Eh? I'm making my fortune. Now I want to hear them read out *my* list of *my* possessions. Clerk, read out *my* list of *my* possessions.

CLERK: Count of Sandomir—

P.U.: Begin with the principalities, you stupid *bougre*!

CLERK: Principality of Podolia, Grand Duchy of Posen, duchy of Courlande, county of Sandomir, county of Vitebsk, Palatinate of Polok, margraviate of Thorn . . .

P.U.: And what next?

CLERK: That's all.

P.U.: What do you mean, that's all? Oh, well then, bring on the Nobles, I'm not rich enough yet by any means, so I'm going to execute the whole lot of them and then I shall take over all their

property. Come on, shove the Nobles into the trap. (*The Nobles are crammed through the trap-door.*) Hurry up, can't you? I want to pass some laws now.

SEVERAL VOICES: We'll see about that.

P.U.: I wish, first of all, to reform the administration of justice, after which we will proceed to the question of finance.

SEVERAL MAGISTRATES: We are opposed to change of any kind.

P.U.: *Merdre*! In the first place the magistrates won't be paid in future.

MAGISTRATES: And what are we to live on? We're all of us poor men.

P.U.: You will have the proceeds of the fines which you impose and the property of anyone you condemn to death.

A MAGISTRATE: Horrible!

A SECOND: Infamous!

A THIRD: Scandalous!

A FOURTH: An insult!

ALL: We refuse to administer justice under such conditions.

P.U.: Into the trap with the magistrates! (*They struggle in vain.*)

M.U.: Eh, what are you doing, Père Ubu? Who's going to deal out justice now?

P.U.: I am, of course. You'll see how well it works out.

M.U.: It'll be delightful, I'm sure.

P.U.: Very well then, be quiet, *bouffresque*. Gentlemen, we will now proceed to the question of finance.

FINANCIERS: There is nothing that needs changing.

P.U.: Excuse me, I want to change everything. In the first place, I want to keep half the revenues for myself.

FINANCIERS: Impossible!

P.U.: Gentlemen, we will establish a ten per cent tax on property, another on commerce and industry, and a third on marriages and a fourth on deaths, those last two of fifteen francs each.

FIRST FINANCIER: Père Ubu, this is idiotic.

SECOND FINANCIER: Absurd.

THIRD FINANCIER: I can't make head or tail of it.

P U.: So you don't give a damn what I say! Into the trap with the financiers! (*The financiers are crammed in.*)

M.U.: But Père Ubu, this is no way for a King to carry on, you're massacring everybody!

P.U.: *Eh merdre*!

M.U.: No more justice, no more finance!

P.U.: Fear nothing, sweet child, I myself will proceed from village to village, gathering taxes.

Scene 3

A peasant's house in the neighbourhood of Warsaw. Several peasants talking together.

A PEASANT: (*coming in*) Listen to the news. The King is dead, so are the dukes, and young Prince Bougrelas has run away to the mountains with his mother. What's more, Père Ubu has seized the throne.

ANOTHER: I've heard more than that. I've come from Krakow, and I've seen the bodies of more than three hundred Noblemen and five hundred Magistrates who have been killed, and it seems they're going to double the taxes and Père Ubu is going to come and collect them himself.

ALL: Good God! What will become of us? Père Ubu is a horrible scoundrel and they do say his family is an abomination.

A PEASANT: Listen: don't you hear someone knocking at the door?

A VOICE: (*outside*) Cornuducopia! Open the door, by my *merdre*, by St. John, St. Peter and St. Nicholas! Open the door, sword of finance, horn of finance, I'm coming to collect the taxes!

(*The door bursts open, Ubu advances followed by a horde of tax gatherers.*)

Scene 4

P.U.: Which of you is the oldest? (*A peasant comes forward.*) What do you call yourself?

PEASANT: Stanislas Leczinski.

P.U.: Very well, cornuducopia, listen to me carefully, or these gentlemen will cut off your rears. For the last time, will you listen to me?

STANISLAS: But your Excellency hasn't said anything yet.

P.U.: What do you mean, I've been talking for an hour. Do you think I've come here to shout into thin air?

STANISLAS: Far be it from me—

P.U.: Well then: I've come here to tell you, command you and signify to you that you must immediately produce and exhibit your finances, otherwise you will be slaughtered. Come, messeigneurs the Dirty Workers of Finance, convey

hither the conveyance of Phynances. (*The conveyance is brought in.*)

STANISLAS: Sire, we are only down on the register for a hundred and fifty-two rixdales which we have payed already six weeks ago come St. Matthew's Day.

P.U.: Quite possibly, but I have changed the government and I have announced through the daily press that everyone is to pay twice as many taxes and three times any which may be imposed later on. With this system I shall rapidly make my fortune, then I'll kill everybody and take myself off.

PEASANTS: Monsieur Ubu, have pity on us in heaven's name, we are poor people.

P.U.: Fat lot I care. Pay up!

PEASANTS: We cannot, we have payed already.

P.U.: Pay! or I'll sew you up with torture and decapitation of the neck and the head: corn of my copia, am I the King or not?

ALL: So this is what he's like! *Aux armes*! Long live Bougrelas, King by grace of God of Poland and Lithuania!

P.U.: Forward, gentlemen of the Finances, do your duty!

(*A struggle begins, the house is knocked down and old Stanislas escapes across the plains. Ubu remains to collect the finance.*)

[*Bordure is imprisoned by Père Ubu in the fortress of Thorn, but escapes to Russia.*]

Scene 6

The Palace at Moscow

THE EMPEROR ALEXIS AND HIS COURT, BORDURE

CZAR: It was you, infamous adventurer, who collaborated in the murder of our cousin Wenceslas?

BORDURE: Forgive me, sire, I was drawn into it against my judgment by Père Ubu.

CZAR: That lying villain. Well, what is your request?

BORDURE: Père Ubu had me imprisoned under the pretext that I had formed a conspiracy. I managed to escape and I have galloped for five days and nights across the Steppes to implore your gracious protection.

CZAR: What do you bring me as a proof of your submission?

BORDURE: My sword, the sword of an adventurer, and a detailed plan of the city of Thorn.

CZAR: The sword I take, but, in the name of St. George, burn the plan, I do not wish to owe my victory to a traitor.

BORDURE: One of the sons of Wenceslas, young Bougrelas, is still alive. I will do everything I can to restore him.

CZAR: What rank did you hold in the Polish army?

BORDURE: I commanded the 5th Regiment of Vilna Dragoons and an independent brigade in the service of Père Ubu.

CZAR: Very good, I commission you as second lieutenant in the 10th Regiment of Cossacks, and it will be the worse for you if you turn traitor. If you fight well, you will be rewarded.

BORDURE: Sire, you will not find me wanting in courage.

CZAR: Very good, withdraw from my presence. (*Exit.*)

[*Under heavy pressure from Mère Ubu and his* conseillers de Phynances, *Père Ubu reluctantly declares war and departs for the front, armed with his dunghook, his baton of physical apparatus, his sabre* à merdre *and his little bit of wood for poking in ears and noses.*]

ACT IV

Scene 3

The Polish army on the march in the Ukraine.

P.U.: *Cornebleu, jambedieu, tête de vache*![1] We are about to perish, for we are dying of thirst and we are fatigued. Mr. Soldier, have the goodness to bring our helmet of finances, and you, Mr. Lancer, take charge of the shears *à merdre* and the baton of physical apparatus to relieve our person, for, I repeat, we are fatigued. (*The soldiers obey.*)

PILE: Hon! *Monsieuye*! It's very odd that the Russians aren't in sight yet.

P.U.: It is regrettable that the state of our finances does not permit us to have a conveyance made to our measurements; as a result, for fear of annihilating our mount, we have come the entire way on foot, leading our horse by the bridle. But when we return to Poland we shall devise, by means of our knowledge of physics and assisted by our counsellors, a conveyance that will transport our entire army through the air.

[1] Horngosh, God's leg, cow's face!

COTICE: Here's Nicolas Rensky dashing up . . .

P.U.: What does the boy want?

RENSKY: All is lost. Sire, the Poles have risen in revolt, Giron has been killed, and Mère Ubu has fled to the mountains.

P.U.: Bird of night, beast of ill fortune, owl in gaiters! Where have you dredged up this rubbish? Tell us another one! And who started all this, ten to one it was Bougrelas. Where do you come from?

RENSKY: From Warsaw, noble lord.

P.U.: *Garçon de ma merdre*, if I believed you I should make the whole army turn back again. But, *seigneur garçon*, there is more wool than grey matter in your head and you have been dreaming nonsense. Go to the outposts, *mon garçon*, the Russians are not far away and we shall soon have to lay about us with our arms, employing our resources of dung as well as those of physics and phynance.

GENERAL LASKY: Père Ubu, do you not see the Russians on the plain?

P.U.: Quite right, it's the Russians. This is a nice position to be in. If only there was some way of getting out of it, but not a hope, we're on high ground and we shall be a target for the whole attack.

THE ARMY: The Russians! the enemy!

P.U.: Come, gentlemen, let us make our dispositions for the battle. We shall stay on this hill and on no account make the foolish mistake of going down. I shall stand in the midst like a human citadel and the rest of you will gravitate around me. I must recommend you to put in your rifles as many bullets as they will hold, for eight bullets may kill eight Russians and that'll be eight more off my hands. We shall place the infantry at the foot of the hill to receive the Russians and kill them off a bit, the cavalry behind them to fling themselves into the mêlée, and the artillery round this windmill here to fire at the whole lot of them. As to ourselves, we shall take up our position in the windmill with the pistol of phynances covering the window; across the door we shall place the baton of physical apparatus, and if anyone attempts to enter, let him beware of the dunghook!

OFFICERS: Your orders, sire Ubu, shall be obeyed.

P.U.: Well, everything will be all right and we shall win the victory. What's the time?

GEN. LASKY: Eleven o'clock in the morning.

P.U.: Then we'll have dinner, as the Russians won't attack before twelve. Tell the soldiers, *seigneur Général*, to relieve nature and to strike up the Song of Finances.

(*Lasky goes out.*)

SOLDIERS AND PALOTINS: Long live Père Ubu, our great Financier! Ting, ting, ting; ting, ting, ting; ting, ting, tating!

P.U.: Oh, my brave men, how I love them! (*A Russian bullet arrives and breaks the sail of the windmill.*) Oh, I'm frightened, my God, I'm dead! . . . No, it's all right after all. I'm safe.

Scene 4

THE SAME, A CAPTAIN, LATER THE RUSSIAN ARMY

A CAPTAIN: (*coming up*) Sire Ubu, the Russians are attacking.

P.U.: Well, what if they are, what do you expect me to do about it? I didn't tell them to attack. However, gentlemen of the Finances, let us prepare ourselves for combat.

GENERAL LASKY: Another bullet!

P.U.: Aha! I've had enough of it. Here it is raining steel and lead, and we might endanger our precious person. Let us descend. (*All rush down at full speed. The battle has just commenced. They disappear in clouds of smoke at the foot of the hill.*)

A RUSSIAN: (*aiming a blow*) For God and the Czar!

RENSKY: Ah, I am killed . . .

P.U.: Forward! Aha, *monsieur*, wait till I catch you, you hurt me, do you realise that, you old soak with your rifle that doesn't go off!

RUSSIAN: Take a look at that. (*He fires off a revolver at him.*)

P.U.: Ah! Oh! I'm wounded, I've a hole in me, I'm perforated, I'm administered, I'm dead and buried. All the same—aha! I've got him. (*Tears the Russian apart.*) Now what have you got to say for yourself?

GEN. LASKY: Forward, let us push on with all vigour and cross the ditch, the victory is ours.

P.U.: Do you think so? Hitherto my brow has been crowned not with laurels but with bruises.

RUSSIAN OFFICERS: Hurrah! Make way for the Czar!

(*The Czar arrives, accompanied by Bordure in disguise.*)

A POLE: Lord, let's run for it, it's the Czar.

ANOTHER: My God, he's across the ditch.

ANOTHER: Pif! Paf! That great *bougre* of a lieutenant, he's killed another four men.

BORDURE: Ah, you won't get away, any of you! Take that, Jean Sobiesky, that's your reckoning! (*He kills him.*) Now for the rest of you! (*He massacres the Poles.*)

P.U.: Forward, my friends. Catch that man! Pound the Muscovites to a jelly! Victory is ours! Long live the Red Eagle!

ALL: Forward! Hurrah! *Jambedieu*! Catch the great *bougre* of a lieutenant!

BORDURE: By St. George, I've fallen!

P.U.: Aha! so it's you, Bordure, my old friend. We are very, very glad to see you again and so is the entire company . . . I'm going to roast you over a slow fire . . . Gentlemen of the Finances, light a fire . . . Oh! Ah! Oh! I'm killed—it must be a cannonball at least that hit me—oh, God, forgive me my trespasses—yes, I'm sure it's a cannonball.

BORDURE: It's a pistol shot, nothing but powder.

P.U.: So you're laughing at me! Again! I'll sew you up!

(*He rushes at him and tears him to bits.*)

GEN. LASKY: Père Ubu, we are advancing on all fronts.

P.U.: So I can see. I can do no more, I'm kicked to pieces, I want to sit down on the ground. I wish I had my bottle of wine.

GEN. LASKY: Go and take the Czar's bottle, Père Ubu.

P.U.: I will, this very minute. Come on! Sabre of *merdre,* do thine office, and thou, hook of finance, stay not behind! Let the baton of physical apparatus toil in a spirit of generous emulation and share with my little bit of wood the honour of murdering, digging open and exploiting the Muscovite Emperor. Forward, *monsieur* our horse of finances! (*He rushes at the Czar.*)

A RUSSIAN OFFICER: Look out, your Majesty!

P.U.: Wait, a moment, oh! aie! Ah! All the same—ah, *monsieur*, forgive me, let me be, I didn't do it on purpose! (*He runs away, pursued by the Czar.*) Holy mother, this madman is running after me! Good god, what have I done? Ah, good, there's still the ditch to cross. Wow, I can feel him just behind me and the ditch in front! Courage, shut your eyes . . . (*He jumps the ditch. The Czar falls in.*)

CZAR: How rotten, I'm at the bottom!

POLISH ARMY: Hurrah! The Czar's down thar!

P.U.: Oh, I hardly dare look round! . . . He's at the bottom of the ditch. It's all right and they're all pitching into him. Go it, my brave Poles, give him all you've got. He can take it, the miserable wretch! I hardly dare look at him myself . . . However, our prediction is borne out in every detail, the baton of physical apparatus has done wonders, nor can it be doubted that I should have slain him once and for all had not an inexplicable sense of fear come to annul and countermand in us the effects of our courage. But we were obliged suddenly to bear a retreat and we owed our safety to our skill as a horseman as also to the solidity of the legs of our horse of finances whose rapidity is equalled only by his solidity and whose agility causes his celebrity, also to the depth of the ditch which most conveniently appeared in the way of the enemy of ourselves the here present Master of Phynances. All this is very well said, but no one is listening to me. Come on! Here they are again!

(*The Russian dragoons make a charge and rescue the Czar*!)

GENERAL LASKY: This time it's a rout!

P.U.: This, I feel, is the occasion to extricate ourselves. Come, *messieurs les Polonais*, forward! or rather, backward!

POLES: *Sauve qui peut*!

P.U.: Come on, let's get going! What a lot of people, what a panic, what a crowd, how am I going to get out of this mess? (*He is knocked over.*) Hi, you! look where you're going, or you shall make proof of the impetuous courage of the Master of Phynances. Aha, he's gone, now's the time to escape and quickly before Lasky

VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE

JOHN BETJEMAN

VICTORIAN buildings will never become as smart as Georgian ones are today. Georgian architecture is the last product of a settled agricultural civilisation when craftsmanship was understood and enjoyed, and rules of proportion were widely known among builders. The jerry-building of Georgian industrialism has hardly survived, and where it does exist, as at Coalbrookdale and here and there in the older industrial towns of the North and in the Stroud valley in Gloucestershire, people who look at it do not think of it as 'Georgian' but as simple and dateless. Most of what is Georgian that survives is well-made and easy to look at. Our minds carry in them a coloured aquatint, be it landscape or street, to form a suitable background to a Georgian building. Then Georgian is nicely and cheaply faked. Blocks of flats, all London over, have Regency beds and Brighton-Pavilion curtains, out of scale with the cupboard-like rooms in which they are placed, no doubt, but unmistakably Georgian. Even an estate agent knows what Georgian means, and I have seen the word used in terms of praise of a house in a serial in *The Symbol*, the paper that is bound up with our parish magazine.

But Victorian can never be smart. It will even defy the analysis of the 'doctors' busy classifying everything around us. You have to use your eyes when looking at it.

Much Victorian architecture is really bad and shoddy. That famous drawing of Doré's is indeed a condemnation of much Victorian industrial building. A modern Doré, I should add, could equally condemn our own jerry-building in the period between the wars and in the present glorious age of prefabs.

I think the chief objections to Victorian architecture are being overcome by time. No one likes the architecture of his immediate predecessors, and most of the writers of architectural books are the children of Victorian parents. Indeed, most widely-read writers of the past, from Wells and Galsworthy to Berta Ruck and Denise Robbins, are writers of the age of reaction from Victorianism. They like few ornaments, plain walls, pastel shades, open windows and as little decoration as possible, or, if there *is* any, a sort of diluted Swedish such as may be bought at Heal's. Again, twenty years ago, young men prided themselves on having social consciences rather than aesthetic perception. Victorian building was utterly condemned and stood in their minds for back-to-back houses in Leeds and those soulless stacks of Dwellings for Artisans which were built with the idea of class distinction. And oh! how horrible class distinction seemed to be in those class-conscious days twenty years ago.

The Victorians very much enjoyed decoration, and decoration in the thirties was considered immoral. The Tower Bridge was the symbol of all that was sentimental and therefore wicked.

Finally, Victorians were condemned for not planning. But this last condemnation is the result of ignorance. There are throughout England industrial estates very carefully planned, as well as middle-class and upper-class neighbourhoods which now may well have become slums, owing to the poverty of our people, but which in those days were not so drab as modern town planners' brochures like to make them appear.

On the credit side, the Victorians were allowed to have produced some good buildings provided no architect had been near them. Civil engineers were, we were told, the great Victorian architects. The Crystal Palace was the first prefab, and this is quite true. Engineering triumphs by Brunel, Stevenson and Barlow were photographed and admired. Cubitt's King's Cross Station, London (1851), was preferred in all its stark simplicity to the romantic outlines of Gilbert Scott's St.

Memorial College, Cuddesdon — *G. E. Street, R.A. Archt.*

Pancras Hotel. And here we may say that the functionalists were echoing opinions expressed seventy years before by Ruskin.

But can it really be that the Victorian age in England which produced such great poets and artists produced no architects? Of course, it is not true. And the way to look at Victorian architecture is to look at it in terms of architects. In former days, even in Georgian times, there were regional styles, and the style predominated over the man who wielded it. The builder was capable of being an architect and had more say in building and finishing an architect's design than he had in the nineteenth century, when architecture became a conscious profession. Builders thereafter did their best to imitate architects, but they rarely produced anything remarkable as a work of art except here and there in the building of mills and factories.

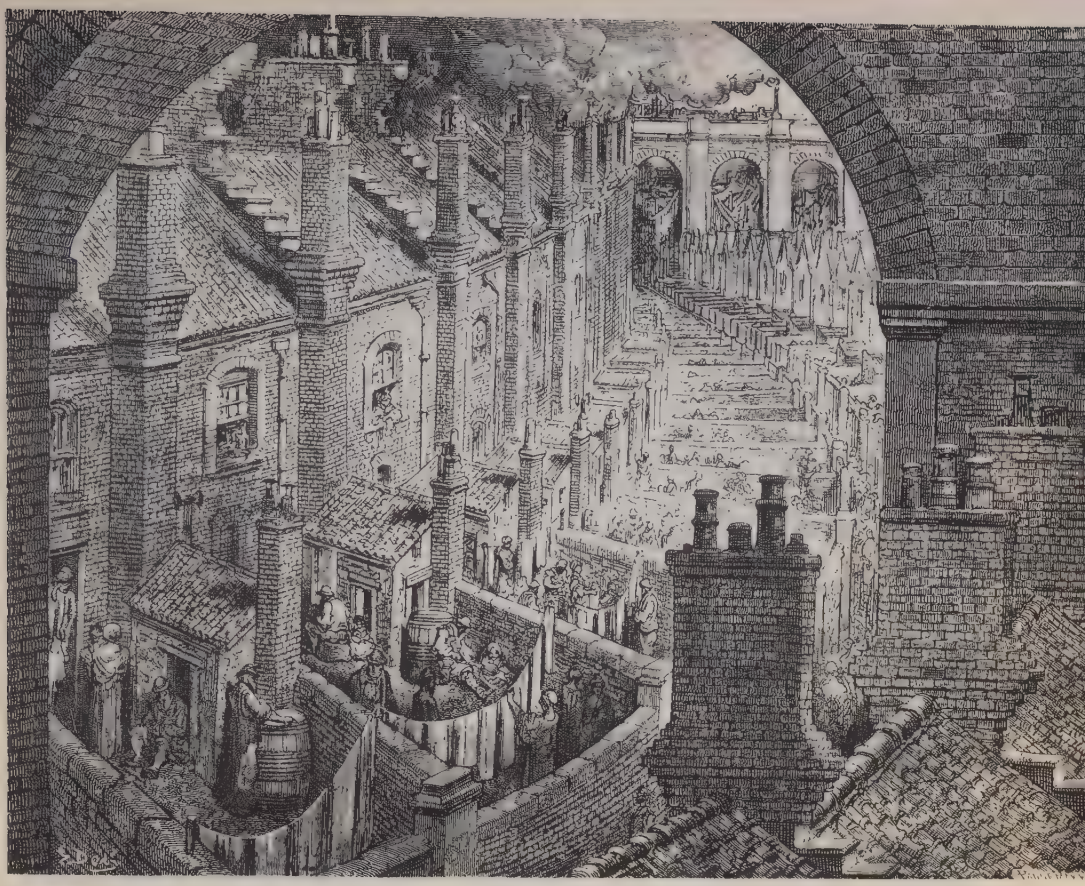
So in this most exciting of all architectural adventures—the hunt for what is good in Victorian brick and stone and iron—we move from the world of the dilettante and his craftsmen to the drawing rooms, clubs and studios of professional gentlemen. Talk is of the Battle of the Styles and of this man's new church and that man's town hall. So-and-So's son and So-and-So's pupil are watched with interest. The centre of architectural activity is now London, and London men go by train all over England at the behest of rich Liberal merchants and Tractarian landowners. Sir Gilbert Scott finds himself away in the Midlands and telegraphs to his office 'Why am I here?' It was no unusual thing in those days for one London architect to be doing thirty large buildings at once. They had their equivalents, these great London men, in certain of the bigger provincial cities: the Worthingtons in Manchester, Pilkington, a Gothic Revival architect of real merit, in Edinburgh, Fulford in Exeter, Ordish in Leicester, and so on. But primarily it is London that is the centre, and I will now flick over with you an album of some of the drawings of these great men and talk a little as we watch the Battle of the Styles.

First there was the Classic Survival, a fine Graeco-Roman style suitable for London Clubs, Town Halls and the Head Offices of Banks. The noblest Classic Survival buildings are, I think, Goldsmith's Hall, London (P. Hardwick, 1829–35); St. George's Hall, Liverpool (H. L. Elmes, 1841); Euston Great Hall (P. Hardwick, 1840–7), and the work from the sixties until the eighties by J. Gibson for the National Provincial Bank. There are also the scholarly works of C. R. Cockerell for the Bank of England, and there is his Ashmolean and Taylorian building at Oxford. We might tack on to the Classic Survival the Byzantine Revival which may be seen in Christ Church, Streatham Hill, by Wild (1841), and that strange church by Sir William Tite at Gerrard's Cross (1859), and Pollen's University Church in Dublin (1858).

The Classic Survival is like a grand after-dinner speech, full of wisdom and elegant oratory. It goes with the port and brandy and the leather arm-chairs and the great velvet curtains of the London and provincial clubs and the station hotel. But the young men are not listening. They have turned from Greece and Rome to their own island, to chancels and screens and organ lofts, to reredos and stoup. Some are led by the romance of mediaevalism to the church of Rome; some continue to follow Pusey. The Gothic Revival of Queen Victoria's reign is all mixed up with social morality and religion, which were deep concerns of educated people in those days.

Perhaps the most disastrous influence on the Gothic Revival was that of Pugin, because he it was, and not Ruskin, who said that no building was Christian unless it had a pointed arch. He was a lonely genius, a craftsman interested in detail and with an eye for colour and material and decoration more than for scale. One feels that he was more interested in detail than structure. The plan and the grouping of the towers of the Houses of Parliament are Sir Charles Barry's, though the delicate decoration is Pugin's. I do not think it fair that Pugin should be given all the credit, as he now is, for Barry's building. While Pugin could produce lovely buildings, provided he had not too much money, as in his Roman Catholic Cathedral at Birmingham, it was his followers who brought such discredit on the Gothic Revival.

Sir Gilbert Scott, for instance, is a Pugin architect, and he it was who carried



Doré *Over London by Rail*

out Pugin's ideas to extreme lengths, insisting on Gothic for all occasions except on that great day when Palmerston finally thwarted his attempts to gothicise Whitehall. Pugin's books of Gothic detail and the many books that followed, giving mouldings and bosses and ball flowers and sedilia and even windows and doors suitable for domestic Gothic—these were a gift to the industrious copyist. Why England is filled with dull churches imitating mediaeval churches in Northamptonshire, Rutland and Oxon, may be put down to Pugin and later on to Parker's *Glossary of Gothic Architecture* and those books of examples which I have mentioned. So long as a building was exactly like some mediaeval one in style, then it was all right. And that chief Gothic stylist, Sir Gilbert Scott, was a man who, for all the 700 and more buildings that he designed, hardly produced one original design in his life. Masonry and sound roofs and correct mouldings, he and his often more talented assistants employed. But Gothic to them was a style, not a way of building.

There were, it is true, one or two mediaevalists who produced enormous imitations of old styles which had a dignity, spaciousness and grandeur equal to, even if slightly and unaccountably different from, their precedents. The Catholic Apostolic church in Gordon Square, London, by the brothers Brandon (1855), and Lancing College chapel by Carpenter (1854), are the best examples of the pure mediaevalist architecture in the Pugin tradition that I know. The work of Pugin's sons and successors has, I think, always been a little over-elaborate and lacking in proportion (Cobh Cathedral, Co. Cork).

But the Gothic Revival architects of the fifties and sixties who should be taken most seriously are those whom Professor Lethaby used to describe as 'hards', saying that their work was founded on building, on materials and ways of workmanship and proceeds by experiment. 'One group I would call the "softs", the other the "hards"; the former were primarily

Design for a West End Club House — *A. Beresford Pite, Archt.*

The Royal Holloway College

W. H. Crossland, Archt.

W. Butterfield, Archt.

sketchers of "designs", the others thinkers and constructors.'

The 'hard' architects are few and great, and the three most remarkable pioneers who thought and constructed in Gothic, rather than imitated, were William Butterfield (1814–1900), George Edmund Street (1824–81) and J. L. Pearson (1817–98). They were men of convinced Tractarian opinions. Their religion pervaded their work. They were more interested, certainly at the beginning of their careers, in constructing and 'thinking in Gothic', as George Truefitt described it, than in style.

Butterfield in 1849 produced a church made out of bricks (All Saints, Margaret Street, London), and realising that bricks could not be carved like stone, he decorated his blank surfaces with coloured bricks, using little decoration at the base of his brick buildings and more towards the top. All his buildings are thoughtful, many of them inspired; none of them is like any mediaeval building anyone has ever seen: they are wholly original. Butterfield worked on the principle that, since he was building in an age when workmen knew how to use brick and cast iron, he would build in brick and cast iron where those materials were most easily come by. In those parts of the West Country where stone was easily available, Butterfield used stone.

George Edmund Street was primarily a country architect, and his simple village schools and chapels-of-ease and convents in the Oxford Diocese are examples of Gothic continuing rather than Gothic revived. He followed the principles of construction which he found in old barns and farm buildings and applied them to the simple new churches he built in local materials.

Pearson was a man primarily interested in vaulting and thrust and counter thrust. He was almost entirely a church architect and his tall, narrow, stone and brick vaulted interiors are seen at their best at St. Augustine's, Kilburn (1871), St. Stephen's, Bournemouth, the Catholic Apostolic Church, Paddington, and Truro Cathedral. A love of God and to build their best for Him was what inspired these architects. Street alone of them seems, towards the end of his life, to have been slightly affected by the world and to have produced less interesting work, though his last work, the Law Courts, will impress everyone for its many-vista-ed thoughtfulness.

Other 'hards' whose work will be admired by anyone who bothers to look at them are James Brooks—St. Columba's, Haggerston; St. Chads, Haggerston; St. Johns, Holland Road, Kensington; William Burges—St. Finbar's Cathedral, Cork, a house in Melbury Road, Kensington, the Speech Hall, Harrow School; E. G. Paley, a North of England architect; J. P. Seddon—University of Wales, Aberystwyth; S. S. Teulon—St. Thomas's, Agar Town, London; William White—All Saints, Notting Hill, St. Saviours, Highbury, London; Henry Woodyer—St. Michaels, Tenbury and St. Paul's Wokingham, New Schools, Eton.

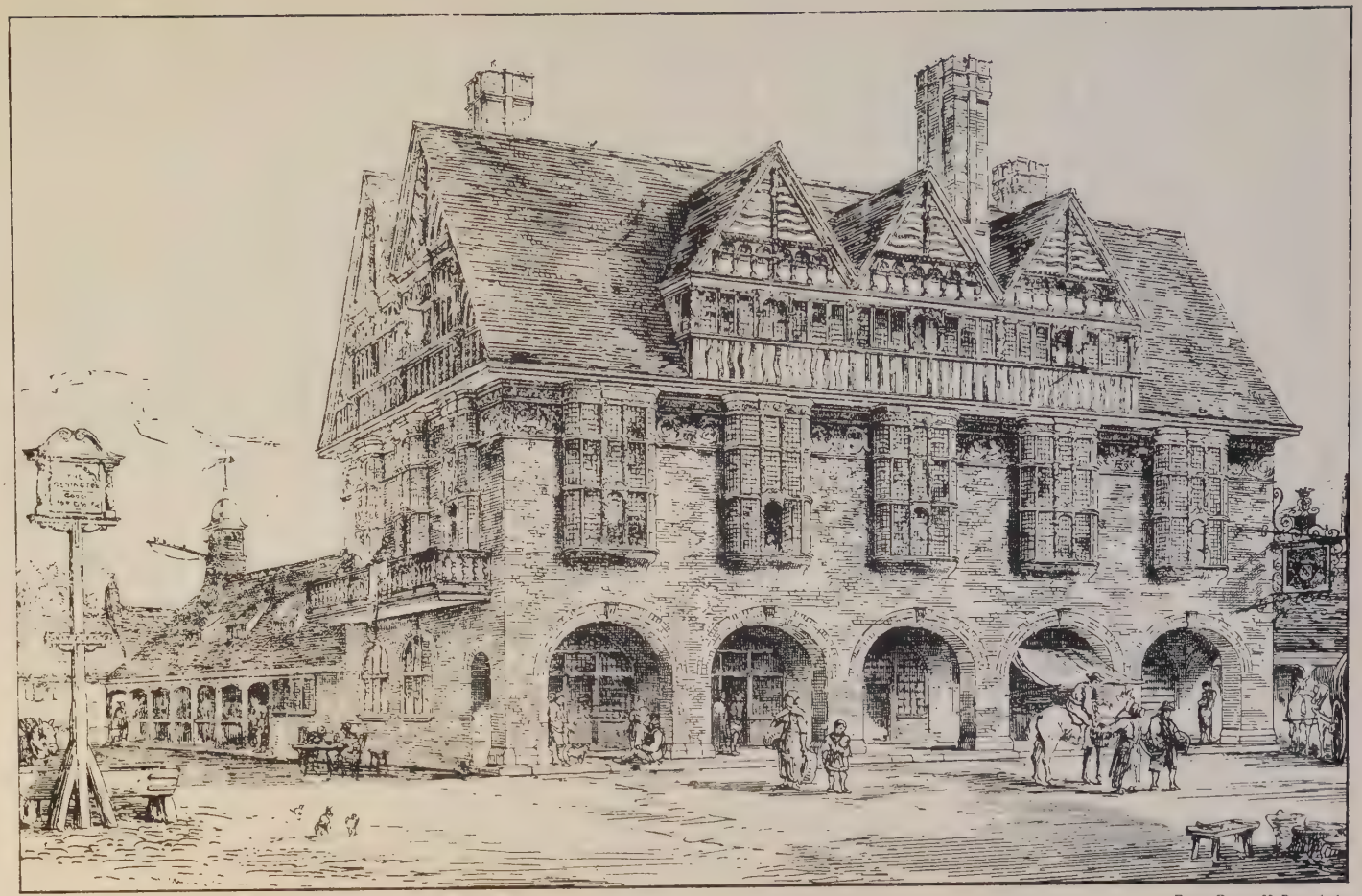
Hard or soft, these Victorian architects were often an inspiration to their pupils. Mr. Street's office seems to have been a very gay place. When William Morris, Edmund Sedding, who was known as 'Jaggy Baggy', Norman Shaw, known as Corporal Bullfoot, and J. D. Sedding were in the office in Oxford, there was one pupil there named Hayward who stuttered. He sang better than he spoke, so it became the custom to chant to him in Gregorian plainsong through rolled-up foolscap. One Ascension Day Mr. Street gave them the day off, provided they went to church, remarking, 'Some of you, I know, have voices.' Life in Scott's office was equally gay, for the Master was away getting jobs much of the time and he talked very good sense to his pupils. Butterfield's office, however, cannot have been a very enjoyable place. He never entered his drawing office himself, the late Harry Redfern who was articled to him tells us, and referred to his draughtsmen as clerks. Butterfield himself, looking rather like Gladstone, sat silent in an adjoining room and his clerks would bring their drawings in to him, which he corrected in ink much to their annoyance. No holidays were allowed except church holidays, and no smoking, of course, and only when he had left his Adelphi office for the Athenaeum did his clerks dare to go out for lunch. The extreme churchiness of these great Tractarian

architects produced reactions in their pupils and children. George Gilbert Scott, junior, the eldest son of old Sir Gilbert and father of Sir Giles, became a Roman Catholic soon after his father's death. Possibly, as a kind of revenge on the slavish copying of his father, he became one of the most original of the later architects of the Victorian age. In 1877 he designed St. Agnes, Kennington (now bombed), in a brick perpendicular style unheard of at that time and imitated everywhere for the next sixty years. Unlike his father, George Gilbert Scott, junior, defended the Classic style and was instrumental in saving the decent brick classic parish church of Hampstead, London. He added an east end to Sir Christopher Wren's chapel at Pembroke College, Cambridge, which I think enhances the look of the chapel, and is in exact keeping with Wren's style.

George Gilbert Scott's friend, G. F. Bodley, another pupil from Scott's office, designed some churches in the manner of St. Agnes, Kennington, of which I particularly remember Hoar Cross, Staffordshire; Holy Trinity, Kensington Gore; the Cowley Fathers' church, Oxford, and St. Germains, Roath, Cardiff. A pupil of young Scott's was Temple Moore, who produced a beautiful, long, limpid perpendicular style partly his own and partly, it seems, Bodley's and the younger Scott's. The best examples of his work I know are St. Wilfrid's, Harrogate; All Saints, Basingstoke; All Saints, Tooting, and Pusey House, Oxford.

From Street's office emerged the most influential and attractive of all Victorian architects—Richard Norman Shaw (1831–1912). He was not a church architect. 'I am a house man,' he used to say to Sedding, 'and soil pipes are my speciality.' The church which he designed at Bedford Park (1876–7), that early attempt at a garden city which owes its inspiration to Shaw, lacks mystery, but his secular buildings are unexampled. He started as a designer of Tudor-style houses such as 'Leys Wood', Sussex (1868), and 'Whispers', Midhurst (1875), making full use of tall external chimneys, half-timber gables and irregular sites. And then in 1873 he electrified the Metropolis by building the New Zealand Chambers in Leadenhall Street, City, in what was for some weird reason called 'the Queen Anne style' but was in reality a form of Dutch Renaissance. He invented a façade for narrow city streets, which let in plenty of light and yet was neighbourly as street architecture. Thereafter he built much in a style more nearly approaching Queen Anne, and a foretaste of Lutyens, both small houses and large. Perhaps the best is 170 Queen's Gate, just near Colcutt's beautiful Imperial Institute. Other great works of his are Swan House, Chelsea (1876); Greenham Lodge, Newbury (1879), and New Scotland Yard (1887). Shaw was primarily interested in the purpose of a building and in the materials and methods of construction. Style was almost an afterthought. It was through thinking like this that he designed New Zealand Chambers and the town houses and offices for which his name will always be remembered. Shaw, more than anyone, was the originator of the small, simple, suburban house which first flourished in garden cities and has now reached local councils and official architects. Men who admired Shaw were first J. J. Stevenson and E. R. Robson, who designed the London council schools, and later Voysey, Baillie Scott, Leonard Stokes, Ernest George, Edwin Lutyens, Edgar Wood and the Tugwells, who built modest villas harmonising with the countryside, yet individual in style. Shaw, indeed, was the founder of modern English architecture as we know it at its domestic best. Towards the end of his life he said that, if he were still in practice as an architect, he would be using concrete. And, indeed, he did use concrete construction of a most daring kind never seen in England before, when he built the convent for our own Church of England Sisters of Bethany at Bournemouth in 1874.

One of Shaw's closest friends was J. D. Sedding, a church architect whose work still seems modern whether it is Classic or Gothic. He designed Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell (1888), and Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, London (1890). Shaw, Stevenson, Godwin, Sedding, George Gilbert Scott, junior, Bodley and their followers represent the traditional English styles coming through Gothic Revival and out again into the open. They are the product of the arts



Design for a Coffee House, Newark

Ernest George & Peto, Archts.

and crafts movement and they are not escapists. They were interested in plan and material, both of the house itself and of every detail in the house, and from that some of them moved on into the planning of towns as a whole, but such men were rarely successful as domestic architects.

There were one or two freaks at the end of the last century whose work is fascinating, but outside the main stream. W. H. Crossland, for instance, in 1887, having been sent round to the châteaux of France by Joseph Holloway (the maker of Holloway's Female Pills), came back and designed that outsize château in red brick and Portland stone called Holloway College on the fir-clad heights above Egham. Beresford Pite, a sound architect and beautiful artist, won the Soane Medallion in 1880 for a design for a West-End club house in a Wagnerian Gothic style that exceeded the wildest fancies of the earlier Gothic Revivalists. Some architects, such as Henry T. Hare and T. G. Jackson (Anglo Jackson), went in for the early Renaissance manner, others went in for a sort of Beardsley-esque baronial. The chief protagonists of this style were two great architects, C. R. Mackintosh and George Walton. They are wrongly, I think, heralded as pioneers of modern architecture. They now seem to me to belong to the art nouveau of the 1890s and I associate them with the early work of Charles Holden. Their ecclesiastical expression is to be found in that strange art-nouveau church of St. David by Caröe at Exeter.

It has been hard trying to survey the juxtaposition of personalities and styles of Victorian architecture in one article. The subject is so much a matter of individuals. Trends and tastes are but surface ripples and end in journalistic generalisations, of which there is already far too much in what I have written. I would advise anyone who is interested in architecture, be it Victorian or Georgian, to look at some of the works of the great men I have mentioned here. There are bound to be examples within twenty or thirty miles of every reader, in England at any rate, and very often the work of these men extended abroad.

Look at the buildings first, remembering, if you are struck with horror and amazement, that the Victorians had all the courage of their convictions and, more often than not, a disregard for texture and dislike of what they thought 'late' or 'debased', that is to say the perpendicular Gothic and, later in the century, the Greek Revival classic style. Having looked, tried to sympathise, sifted good from pretentious, then is the time to read the stimulating works of those pioneers on the appreciation of Victorian building, Mr. Goodhart-Rendel, Sir Kenneth Clark and Mr. John Summerson.

THE MIRROR

DAVID CAMPBELL

In the crystal oval wait
Sighs and snows and ravens' feet.

Love is deceiving, none shall pass
Undistorted by the glass;

And when the snows of winter fall
The raven's foot shall cross us all.

In the crystal oval wait
Sighs and snows and ravens' feet.

MLLE. MONET

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

I

I KEPT running into her: in my hotel, in the museums, in the restaurants, in the street. Yet I could not honestly have said that she was running after me; and I certainly wasn't running after her. Far from it: after our second meeting I began to be afraid of going anywhere, because she was sure to be there. It was in the Museum of Roman Art at Arles that I first became aware of her; no doubt it wasn't the first time I had come across her, but it was the first time I noticed her and the first time she spoke to me. I was staring at a fat, decapitated Silenus, a gross old man sprawling on the ground, when somebody said in French:

'Excuse me, monsieur; can you tell me where I'll find the famous *Vénus d'Arles*?'

I remembered reading the inscription; but the statue itself, a mere plaster cast, hadn't struck me.

'I'm sorry, madame, I can't remember where she is; but I believe she's somewhere at the other end . . . I'll have a look, if you like,' I added, for she seemed disinclined to move.

'Oh, thank you a thousand times . . .', she began, but I'd already started a hurried inspection of all the females in the establishment, paying special attention to their labels.

'*La voilà*,' I shouted, eager to return to old Silenus. Why couldn't the good lady find her own Venuses, I wondered; the museum wasn't all that big. Perhaps she couldn't read. She intercepted me:

'You are very kind, monsieur; she is very beautiful, I believe. Are you a lover of Art? You are a foreigner I should think; Eengleesh?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I'm English. Sometimes I'm a lover of Art as well, but your Venus isn't quite my type.'

'You are joking, monsieur; if you weren't a sincere lover of Art, you wouldn't be here. It isn't often one finds so young a man in a place like this; you are a student, perhaps?'

'Yes, I'm a student; but not an art student . . . I'm afraid I must be going on; I want to see the early Christian remains before lunch.'

'An enthusiast, obviously,' she said; 'au revoir, monsieur'.

Saying good-bye to Silenus with my eyes, I left; as for madame, I dismissed her as a cranky old lady. Her large black hat, worn at a slight angle, did not go with her cheap and rather untidy cotton frock, far less with her white plimsolls. It was July and hot enough; but the French have a way of combining comfort with elegance. Madame's skirt was too short for her

age—she must have been forty-five at the very least—and the whole dress, with its pattern of poisonous flowers, didn't look as though it ought to have belonged to her. Plimsolls, of course, are comfortable, but they're far from cool. Still, it was none of my business: *chacun à son goût.*

Half an hour later, she turned up in the other museum; she was suddenly there, standing among the early Christian sarcophagi. I was a little surprised, since the place had seemed deserted when I came in; but she was wearing plimsolls and it was natural that she should pass on to the early Christians, just as I had done. One couldn't help wanting to see the point at which two great cultures had diverged.

I grew suspicious only when she addressed me again, and hypocritically at that:

'*O cher monsieur*, how enchanting to meet you again; and what a strange coincidence! We two must be the only true lovers of Art in the whole of Arles.'

'Damn your art . . . and your craft, old lady,' I thought; but I said: 'I can't see that there's anything very strange about our meeting again, considering that there are only two decent museums in the town; besides, I told you I was coming here.'

'Did you really, monsieur; how very considerate of you. The fact is that, though your French is excellent, I don't always understand what you're saying. Perhaps I suffer from some defect; very often I don't even understand the people here in Provence. I'm a Parisian, you know; Jeanne Monet, not related to the so-called painter of that name, though a painter too . . . a very unfortunate coincidence, I always say.'

'Enchanted!' I replied, French style, but I probably didn't look it. She was expecting me to introduce myself; instead, I asked her whether she'd liked the *Vénus d'Arles.*

'But of course, she's divine. What dignity, majesty, poise and power!' Saying this, she drew herself up, stood on tip-toe, stiffened her arms, pushed out her emaciated chest and raised her head. If it hadn't been for her straw hat, tilted coquettishly, she might have succeeded in looking like an elderly gym instructor; as it was, I had to turn away and focus all my attention on the allegories carved around the sides of one of the stone coffins.

'Wonderful!' I sighed, 'as good as another life,' and hurriedly launched a panegyric, more nervous than lyrical, on the privileges once granted to the dead.

'Ah, you're a poet; but I'm sure you're far too young to think about death at all. For me, it's different; I'm an old woman with no prospects but the grave.'

I didn't contradict her, as she quite evidently expected me to do. It was now clear to me that I should have to be on my guard with Mlle Monet. Her conversation was full of booby-traps, ambushes and provocations.

'*C'est la vie*,' I commented as fatuously and as impersonally as possible, and left the museum.

After that, I met her everywhere. To my horror, I discovered that she occupied the room next to mine in the hotel. She liked the same restaurants, drank *apéritifs* at the same time and in the same cafés, was interested in the same buildings. She drove me out of St. Trophime, the lovely Byzantine church; in the cloisters, her face leered at me in the shape of one of the weird ornamental figures on the columns.

When I could stand it no longer, I took to walking out of the town, along the banks of the Rhône and as far out as the wild plains of the Camargue. Every morning I crept out of my room, as she had a way of popping out of hers to talk to me whenever I opened my door.

One afternoon I found myself in the Roman cemetery at Alyscamps, just outside Arles. Here the sarcophagi were plain, apart from inscriptions, many of which were no longer legible; they were set out in rows and so made death look like a tedious dinner party at which all the guests are nonentities. I was just about to go on, thinking I'd prefer to take a look at St. Honorat, an ancient and disused abbey behind the cemetery, when a voice called out:

'Oh what a melancholy place! And yet how beautiful! The symmetry of death, one might call it. Surely you're not going already, monsieur.'

It was Mlle. Monet again; she'd been watching me from some hiding-place, I was sure. At first I couldn't locate her at all; then I saw her sitting on the ground, her back resting against a pine-tree. She was painting or drawing. It suddenly struck me that she might well think *I* was pursuing *her*; she seemed to be well established here in the cemetery and it was I who had intruded into her domain. Or had she brought her painting materials only to cover up her dubious activities?

'If this is the symmetry of death, I don't like it. Life isn't symmetrical and I don't see why death should be. I'd give all this ancient rubble for a single cypress tree alive under the sun. That's what I've come here to see and to feel: sunlight; if I wanted melancholy, I might just as well have stayed in the North.'

I couldn't help responding to her provocations; but meanwhile I'd walked up to her, because I wanted to find out whether she'd really been working.

She had: there were two sketches of the cemetery and the arch which served as an entrance; she was now doing a water-colour. As far as I could judge, she'd completely ignored the possibilities of her subject: the contrast between the glaring white of the coffins, hard and smooth as bones, and the dark-green of the vegetation, shrubs and trees. Her sarcophagi were more evenly spaced than the originals, though they made up for it by the shakiness of the lines; they might have been rows of bath-tubs in a factory. She was both clumsy and unimaginative.

'This will be my masterpiece,' she said, 'not that my earlier work is bad —but I've exhausted Paris, you know. I must have painted every inch of the Seine, every one of the bridges, every flower in the Luxembourg, every tree in the Bois. I believe in Nature, you see; you won't find me doing any of that abstract nonsense. Though I can hardly afford it, I've had to come all the way down to the South for new material. I hope you like my picture, monsieur; I have great faith in your judgment.'

'I can't see why you should want to flatter me, madame; it so happens that I know nothing whatsoever about art. And your painting isn't even finished. It would be foolish and presumptuous of me to comment on the work of a professional artist.'

She could see that I was trying to get away.

'Stay and talk to me,' she implored, 'you don't know what it means to be a lonely old woman. You can sit down here and watch me paint; you'll be doing me an inestimable favour and learning more about art at the same time. Please don't go away.'

Her appeal upset me; I'm easily moved to pity. At the same time, I was eager to escape from her and from the cemetery; for some reason, I

associated the two in my mind, though Mlle. Monet was by no means moribund. The hottest part of the day was over and I was looking forward to a stroll through the streets of Arles; besides, I was due to dine with Annette that evening. Annette was studying English at Aix-en-Provence; I'd been corresponding with her for more than a year, ever since our first meeting in London.

'I can't stay more than a few minutes: I've got an appointment in town.' She looked at me with dog-like eyes; it was embarrassing. Nevertheless, I sat down on the ground and watched her mix more dirty grey in the lid of her paint-box.

'I hope, monsieur, that your tastes are not modern. You are young, of course; but your manners and your interests set you apart at once. Are you acquainted with the work of Picasso, Matisse and all the other heretics and blasphemers who call themselves modern artists? Or perhaps in England you are spared the knowledge of such abominations? Is it true that artists in England paint their pictures on the pavements?'

'Not all of them, by any means,' I replied, 'only those who are not quite good enough to have their work accepted for the Royal Academy. Generally speaking, though, they are compensated for this failure by the appreciation and the financial support of a wider public. As for contemporary painters, I'm afraid I don't quite agree with you. Mountains and trees and rivers have been painted before, too often and too well; in themselves they can never become meaningless; but art, unfortunately, has to create its own meaning, which isn't that of the subject. That's why there are Impressionists, Expressionists, Synthesists, *Pointillistes*, Cubists, Surrealists and what have you. It's no good condemning all these as "modern".'

She uttered a little squeak and put down her brush:

'Oh, you have disillusioned me; I have always thought you a charming young man and here you are defending all the imposters who have ruined Art.'

I thought she was going to start crying; her voice had trembled dangerously.

'I am sure you are being unjust,' I said, 'of course there are always three bunglers and charlatans for every genuine artist, and the charlatans may even find it easier than ever before to get away with it. But that doesn't remove the need for new vision and new techniques. It's the critics' business to distinguish genuine innovators from apes and lunatics.'

She had not recovered from the shock and seemed incapable of taking up her brush; pensively and absent-mindedly, she said:

'Oh yes, the critics. In Paris—I move in very distinguished circles, you know—I was once introduced to an art critic. He knew that I'm a painter and, for a whole hour, talked about surfaces, planes and textures, squares

and triangles, physical and intellectual processes, dozens of *isms*—some of which, I grant you, have the most splendid names—tones and keys, influences and creative currents. I sat back in my chair and imagined that all these beautiful words were a declaration of love. At the end of it, I smiled at him and asked him to dinner. He was a charming young man, not unlike you . . .'

She stopped and glanced at me slyly out of the corner of one eye; I looked the other way:

'Well, what came of it? Did he come to dinner?'

'Oh yes, he came to dinner; but only because he thought I wanted him to write an article about my work. I don't think he liked my work; I never saw him again.'

'What a pity!', I said, as priggishly as possible, because I didn't want her to know that I felt sorry for her.

II

Considering that we'd only met two or three times, Annette and I got on very well together. There were never any awkward pauses in our conversation; we never felt that we were talking for the sake of talking. We discussed our respective universities, books and films, national idiosyncrasies, general or trivial matters. Ours was a friendship which, at any moment, might have turned into love; but we both disliked sentimental effusions. We were sure of each other and thought it unnecessary to define our relationship. Occasionally, it is true, Annette had asked me in her letters about my girl friends in England; in such cases it was easy for me to be frank, since there wasn't much to conceal: a few facetious comments and confessions were all that was needed. In return, she would tell me about the unlucky law student who insisted on proposing to her once every term.

'It's become a sort of reflex action,' she said, while we were drinking St. Raphaels on the main boulevard; 'every time he comes near me, I feel tempted to yell "No!".'

Annette was wondering whether her parents would let her go down to the sea for a week; she had never yet been allowed to travel by herself. Fortunately, the doctor had said that she needed a holiday and her parents wouldn't be able to leave Arles; as far as she knew, there weren't any convenient relatives to whom she could be entrusted. The chances seemed pretty good. We were thinking of going to Martigues, a small fishing town on the Etang de Berre, because it was said to have a good beach and few tourists; and it was both nearer and cheaper than the Côte d'Azur.

Even Arles was quiet enough; except when there was a market, a fête or a bullfight, the more fashionable restaurants and cafés were nearly empty. Apart from the droning and buzzing of two Americans in the opposite corner, the terrace of our café was quite silent; on the pavement in front

of us there was an unending procession: the people of Arles on that evening walk which, in Mediterranean towns, is a regular social and recreational function.

We had planned our campaign; Annette would confront her parents on the following morning. If all went well, we should be able to leave two days later. We had decided that, all things considered, it wouldn't be wise to mention my name; though her parents knew about me and even approved of me, they were not likely to trust me to that extent. If necessary, we were prepared to travel on different buses. We rather enjoyed the sensation of conspiracy; and I had an idea that Annette would not be intimidated by a refusal. She had a habit of keeping an ace up her sleeve; her dark eyes, now alive with mischief, were a reservoir of unmentioned possibilities and resources.

It was getting cool.

'Let's finish our drinks,' I suggested; 'you can take me to your favourite restaurant. I've been here more than a week, but I haven't formed any habits yet. Besides, very often I eat in those little *bistros* in the back streets, behind the Place de la République; but I'm hungry tonight.'

'So am I, Tom,' said Annette; 'let's go.'

I called for the waiter.

'Do you mind if I join you, Tom?' said an all too familiar voice behind me. I swung round, amazed and furious. She was sitting at the table immediately behind ours, in such a way that she could see Annette and listen to our conversation without being seen by me. She looked positively monstrous: her face was covered with a thick layer of yellow powder and her mouth was magnified to twice its size with lipstick. I didn't know what to say; I rather think I blushed. She looked like a superannuated prostitute.

'Well, aren't you going to speak to your friend?' said Annette, with a dangerous twinkle in her eyes.

'Friend my foot . . .' I was going to say, but Mlle. Monet had already interpreted Annette's words as an invitation. As she sat down at our table, I got up to look for the waiter and gain a little time. She had called me by my Christian name, which she must have overheard; I was sure that I had always been careful not to introduce myself. This was obviously an elaborate scheme.

When I'd found the waiter, who was reading a paper behind the bar, settled with him and returned to our table, Mlle. Monet had succeeded in getting Annette to ask her to have dinner with us. By the way Annette glanced at me, I could tell that she was thinking: 'Caught you out!' I knew then that the situation was serious and that I should be able to save it only by calling Mlle. Monet's bluff.

'May I ask how you came to address me by my Christian name?' I began as quietly as I could, while we moved on.

'But dear Tom, you yourself told me to use it; don't you remember . . .'

'I certainly do not and I consider your familiarity in the worst of taste. You are trying to mislead my friend into thinking that you and I are on intimate terms. Kindly apologise and explain your intentions.'

Mlle. Monet stopped walking, staggered and exclaimed:

'O mon Dieu! He is insulting an old woman and his best friend! It's too much; I can't bear it. Mademoiselle,' she appealed to Annette, 'don't let him do it. Don't believe a word he's saying; he is trying to murder me.'

I couldn't help laughing: 'Stop the amateur dramatics, madame; mademoiselle and I understand each other too well. She won't be taken in by your exhibition.'

Mlle. Monet turned round, walked three paces away from us and collapsed. We had just reached the restaurant.

'Get some water, quickly,' Annette shouted.

'She's only acting, Annette. She's lost her game and now she's trying to arouse our sympathy. She'll get up again.'

But I wasn't at all certain that she would; in spite of her absurdities, Mlle. Monet was fundamentally sincere; that's what made her so sinister.

A little crowd was beginning to collect around the body; the only thing

to do was to pick her up and carry her into the restaurant, where we deposited her on a chair. We made it clear that the lady suffered from fainting fits and would soon recover. A waiter guarded the door and convinced those outside that nobody had died, while another brought a glass of cognac and administered it.

'Well,' said Annette, 'I suppose you might as well order some food; but there's more to this than you want me to believe. I think it's your turn to offer an explanation. You obviously know that woman and, what's more, she is genuinely attached to you. I suppose you're aware that you've ruined my reputation in Arles and that my parents are sure to hear of this. We'll never get away now . . . But I believe she's opened her eyes.'

Now I was quite unnerved; of course, she'd won her game, after all! Oh! she was damnably clever. I couldn't order the food; my hand was trembling so much that I couldn't read the menu.

I looked at Mlle. Monet; she was weeping silently. Her tears soaked into the yellow powder and formed little mounds and furrows on her face. She hadn't stirred; her head still rested on the back of the chair and her white plimsolls lay limply on the floor. Then she spoke:

'Ah, you are still with me, dear Tom; you haven't deserted your old friend, who nearly died for your sake. And that charming young lady is still with you . . . I believe I'm feeling better.'

She pulled herself together and looked round for her handbag, which I'd put down on an empty chair. Then she produced a handkerchief and a mirror and began to dab her face; she managed to change its geography once again, but hardly for the better; lipstick, powder and tears were now mingled and formed an abstract composition of streaks and patches.

Annette had ordered an hors d'œuvre. She seemed sad and distracted; I had never yet known her sense of humour to fail.

'Mlle. Monet,' I said, 'as you see, you've succeeded in spoiling our evening, if not more. Perhaps you'll now have the goodness to tell Mademoiselle exactly how, where and when you and I have previously met.'

'Ah, it's a long story, Mademoiselle,' she began; 'to start with, I have the pleasure of staying in the same hotel as Monsieur Tom; and in that same hotel, we've had many a delightful *tête à tête* . . .'

'That's enough,' I rasped, no longer able to control my exasperation; 'I think you'd better leave us now; you've done enough harm as it is. And don't ever dare . . .'

But Annette had got up.

'Don't try to excuse yourslf, Tom,' she said, as I followed her out; 'I shall never speak to you again.'

'But don't be a fool, Annette; that woman is raving mad. Come back and I'll tell you the whole story. She's been following me about all over the place . . .'

'I'm sorry, Tom; after all that's happened tonight, I don't know which of you is telling lies. There's something between you, anyway . . . And everybody in Arles will be talking about me tomorrow.'

She started to sob and run at the same time. I caught up with her and stopped her by putting my arms round her waist. She slapped my face and shouted 'Leave me alone!' Windows were opened and there were cries of 'What's going on?' A waiter suddenly leapt round the corner after us: 'Madame can't pay, madame can't pay for the hors d'œuvre; and there's the cognac too!', he roared at me.

'All right, I'm coming back in a minute,' I assured him.

Annette had disappeared.

III

As I walked back to the restaurant, I couldn't believe that all this had really happened; that, for all I knew, the whole course of my life had been altered by the histrionics of an absurd woman whom I'd never been able to take seriously; and all in the course of a few minutes. What astonished me most was that so little had been needed to destroy Annette's faith in myself; or was she really concerned about her reputation? If so, I had misjudged her. On the other hand, the incident had been both revolting and pathetic; it had certainly upset me and probably Annette had been more deeply shaken than she pretended to be—also, I could see that it would be difficult for us to meet again in public. I could write to her or look her up the following day; but I had a feeling that Annette would never go back on her word and that the whole basis of our relationship had been shattered. Even if I succeeded in proving my innocence—and this had seemed strangely difficult—something had happened; something sordid and wildly passionate had jolted the delicate balance on which our friendship depended.

'Ah!' said Mlle. Monet, who had apparently polished off three plates of hors d'œuvre in my absence, 'I am glad that you have taken the young lady home. Now that I know your Christian name and have saved you from one of those abominable modern females, you'll be kind to your old Jeanne and perhaps take *her* to Martigues which, incidentally, is a place eminently suitable for a true painter, a lover of Nature and Art.'

'Mlle. Monet,' I replied, flabbergasted, 'if I weren't convinced that you are hopelessly deranged and if I weren't sorry for you, I'd call for the police. As it is, I must warn you that if you ever have the impertinence to address another word to me, I shall take measures to protect myself from your advances. You may finish your meal, if you wish.'

When I left, Mlle. Monet was convulsed with weeping. Her tears, now like water colour, trickled down her cheeks, hung on her chin and dripped on to the table-cloth. A waiter stood by, waiting for her order.

'*O mon Dieu*!' she sobbed, '*O mon Dieu*!'

By courtesy of POINTS, Paris

THE ICONOCLASM OF FRANCIS BACON

ROBERT MELVILLE

Two or three months ago I saw at Francis Bacon's studio a painting that was a kind of paraphrase of the famous portrait of Pope Innocent X by Velazquez. It was one of three studies of the Velazquez, intended for an exhibition at the Hanover Gallery. The second version had been completed and was away at the framers. The one I saw was completed, too, but because it had found its own dimensions in the middle of a huge canvas, it was still in the studio waiting for the paint to dry, so that the canvas could be cut down and put on to a new stretcher.

This picture contained an iron-grey curtain hanging in deep, regular folds, and a figure in papal robes seated in a gold chair. The figure was in much the same position as the Velazquez Pope, but whereas Innocent X poses with relaxed dignity, his hands drooping gracefully over the arms of the chair, Bacon's figure was tense, and clutched at the arm-rests in fear; and instead of that extraordinary look of ferrety penetration on the greasy red face of the Pope, this face—exquisitely painted in mauves and greens—was torn open by a scream. The Velazquez figure is complacent in worldly knowledge; in Bacon's version it looked as if it had suddenly been confronted by all the horrors of damnation. But the mysterious, the wholly inexplicable thing about Bacon's painting was the fact that the figure and the chair were not in front of the curtain, or behind it, but had somehow materialised within it. Technically, it was a masterly solution of a problem that haunted the Cubists—the problem of describing solid forms without destroying the two-dimensional integrity of the canvas surface. It was a different solution, baroque in spirit, and as phantasmal in appearance as the miraculous apparition of the Christ of the Sorrows on Saint Veronica's kerchief.

Two weeks after I visited his studio, Bacon destroyed this picture, and when the other version was returned from the framers, it went the same way. The third version never saw the light. I am convinced that the picture I had the privilege of seeing was a masterpiece, and I find it difficult to believe that Bacon destroys his pictures merely because he is dissatisfied with them. Most painters attach an almost sacred value to their works and are very reluctant to destroy them. Artists of great eminence—Picasso and Matisse among them—allow many inferior works to leave their studios, for the artist of today has a horrible tendency to fall in love with his own 'handwriting'; he sees it as the mark of genius, and it is sacrosanct even when it only writes a confusion. So the destruction, by the maker himself, of some of the most potent images of our time, presents an extreme, perhaps a unique situation. Francis Bacon has a horror of giving proofs of his power.

He paints at such a phenomenal speed that, if the bulk of his work had been preserved, he would almost certainly have more large pictures to his name than any other living artist. As it is, Marcel Duchamp, who stopped painting many years ago, is probably the only artist of equal talent to whom a smaller number of works can be attributed.

Swiftness of execution has become an essential of his creative process, for he has to re-create visualisations that are so tenuous that they can only be seen, so to speak, out of the corner of the mind's eye. He has to snatch, as it flashes across his mind, the movement of a head, the sliding of an inert body, the passage of a scream. It was Zola who said, in defence of the Impressionists: 'I have the deepest admiration for individual works, for those which burst forth in one spurt, from a vigorous and unique hand.' But he was looking ahead, and it is Francis Bacon who begins to draw near to the dream of creating a large picture in a single spurt.

In a way, his concern is with the act more than the result, with means not ends, although he knows that the ends prescribe the means. His concern is with the power to make images rise up suddenly on his canvas, as a sorcerer might summon up spirits, wanting nothing of them except their emergence at his bidding. If he has a finished picture in his studio, it disturbs him, but he does not want it to go into the world. He releases one occasionally, but only when compelled to throw it like a counter into the game of keeping body and soul together. Pictures that are no longer in his hands tend ever so faintly to compromise the present; they flaunt his power; they talk about him behind his back. He no doubt lives in a certain apprehension of his gift of demonstration, for the apparitions which emerge on to his canvases carry uncontrollable intimations of the obscure forces they conceal.

The sceptical reader of this explanation of Bacon's iconoclasm will agree that at any rate it does not err by being extreme, for if he looks at one or two of the pictures, he will see that Bacon is—pre-eminently in his time—the painter of extreme situations.

The picture which he calls 'A Fragment of a Crucifixion' is really the beginning of a Deposition, but a deposition in which the crucified flesh itself, attempting to draw away from its own misery, slips the nails, looms up over the top of the cross and begins to crawl down the other side like a dog, dripping a magenta mucus. It is so far gone that the agony leads a life of its own, and becomes a detached lump of flayed flesh, with a scream at its centre, hovering like a fat bird and beating the air with stiff quills of blood. It will, one supposes, evaporate when the body hanging above it is finally dead, like those perverted animals in 'The Temptation of St. Anthony' that disappear with the coming of light. Far off is the blue line of the Mediterranean, and people walking, and cars purring sedately through the heat. I do not know any work which lives more brilliantly and frantically at the heart of 'this mystical epoch which is without faith.' There are no moral assumptions in this composition, only a wonderfully sensuous perception of the far edge of being, which leaves a rich taste of mortality in the mouth. Bacon insists that his pictures must never be seen without glass: the glass makes them a little more difficult to see because one's own reflection is there, rather self-conscious and insubstantial, mingling quite felicitously with images of the flesh in its last extremity.

Bacon is achieving universality of an order which is only possible in an age in which the breakdown of values has been completed. Nietzsche prophesied that there would come a time when man would be able to grasp only that which is humiliating, and Bacon, acknowledging that the prophecy has come true, nevertheless shows it to be as firm a foundation as any of the more seemly states of mind, for the propagation of the sense of glory. Never has there been more elation of execution, never a greater sense of freedom: yet it occurs in the atmosphere of the concentration camp.

Bacon is unquestionably the greatest painter of flesh since Renoir, but the intense beauty of the colour and texture of his flesh painting is at the same time horrifying, for it discovers a kind of equation between the bloom and elasticity of sensitive tissue and the fever and iridescence of carrion. He is the painter of flesh considered as a communal substance; as the guinea-pig of the senses, the trap of the spirit, the stuff of which murderers cannot get rid, the legitimate prey of pain and disease, of ecstasies and torments; obscenely immortal in renewal.

The picture of a naked man going through curtains was in no need of a

Head 1949

Collection: W. S. Ludington, Esq., U.S.A.

Fragment from a Crucifixion 1950

Hanover Gallery

Study for a figure 1949 Hanover Gallery

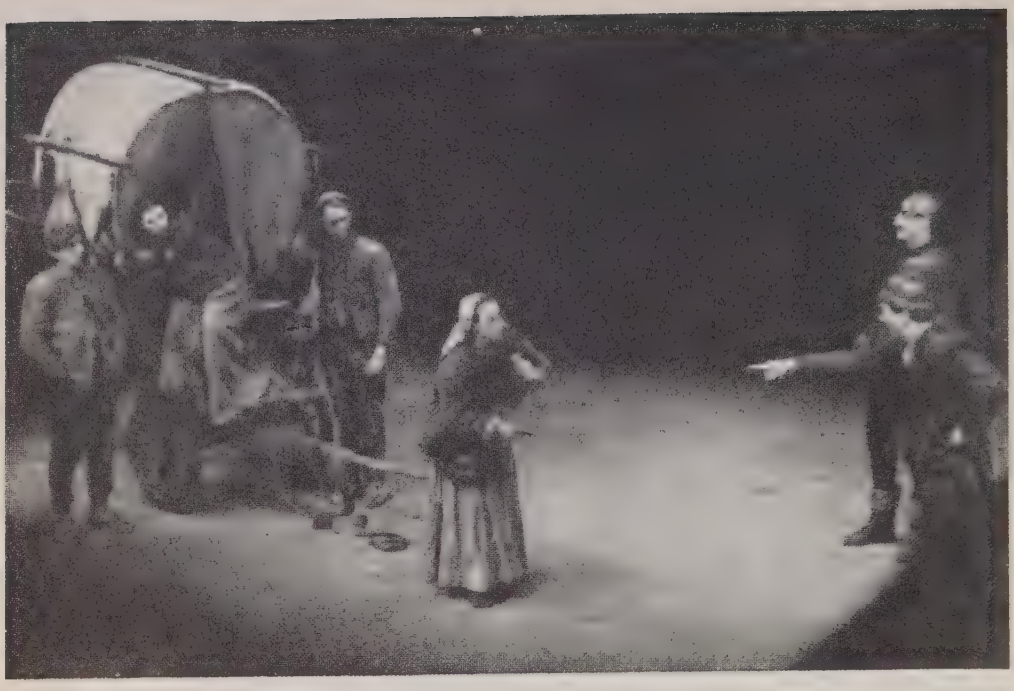
Painting 1950 Hanover Gallery

Portrait of Francis Bacon — *Robert Buhler*

Reproduced by kind permission of the Leicester Galleries

sequel, but a sequel has appeared. In a recent painting he has passed through the curtains and crouches on the other side, reaching up to fasten the curtains together with safety-pins, going through the motions of a privacy that is quite illusory, for no one will ever have privacy again. One can still experience the sensation of loneliness—perhaps more excruciatingly than ever—but when man reaches the stage of knowing only that which is humiliating, each one of us practises the privacy of everyone else. The crouching man is hidden by a large box in the foreground. It is related to the glass box in which so many of Bacon's figures have been incarcerated. But this one is black and has no transparency. The man crouches because, when he has grown tired of the little game of keeping the curtains together, he will assuredly hunch himself into the box. If he comes out again, and possibly he will, we shall know that so far he has been trying it for size. But it has been pointed out that his gesture is of a kind that has been made familiar by the last page of many children's books, where a hand reaches up to write the word—

FINIS



Mutter Courage meets a Recruiting Sergeant

Photographs taken by Ruth Berlau during the production at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin

Mutter Courage in the Protestant Camp

THE THEATRE

BERTOLT BRECHT'S
Mutter Courage

GEOFFREY SKELTON

EXCEPT for the classics, plays in Germany nowadays have little chance of crossing the border between East and West. In the German theatre the cold war is also waged. The West denounces all plays produced in the East as Soviet propaganda, while the East sees in West-produced plays nothing but the death-cries of a degenerate society.

Bridging these barren artistic generalities is a single figure: Bertolt Brecht, fifty-two-year-old author of that famous between-the-wars adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* known as *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Two of his more recent plays, *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* ('Mother Courage and Her Children') and *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti* ('Puntila and His Servant Matti'), have been produced in both camps with success, and *Mutter Courage* in particular is regarded as a masterpiece.

Yet Brecht is a Marxist, and an uncompromising one. His headquarters are Reinhardt's old Deutsches Theater in the Soviet sector of Berlin, and he and his colleagues are active Communists, most of them being *Nationalpreistraeger* of the East German Government. Brecht writes consciously as a 'people's poet', and all his writings are a savage attack on the overlords of this world. His period of exile in Scandinavia, the United States and Switzerland (he preferred exile to making his peace with the Nazis) failed to reconcile him to the idea of a capitalist democracy. His aim is to destroy it.

Western Germany is entitled to some credit for tolerating within its camp this vociferous enemy, for certainly the other side is never tolerant in the same way. Yet it must be confessed that the Western Germans can show no native dramatist of equal power, and producers in search of something to vary the diet of French and English translations cannot simply ignore him. There is always some opposition, of course; most newspaper critics are apt to be sour, but it is the sort of opposition which stimulates rather than kills business. There is no doubt that the ordinary man finds Brecht well worth seeing.

For Brecht, though a passionately sincere Communist, is first and foremost an artist, and he knows how to clothe his ideas in a form that is entertaining as well as instructive: he is very insistent on the importance of the entertainment element. If his ideas often lack originality (the frequency with which he adapts the works of others is a proof of his weakness here), his character-drawing is masterly: Mother Courage herself, the servant Matti and Azdak, the people's judge in *The Chalk Circle*, are complete human beings with nothing of the theatre about them. And the power they have to move us reconciles us, in the case of Matti, to the over-simple statement of the rich versus the poor theme, or, in the case of *The Chalk Circle*, to the lengthy restatement of the well-known judgment of Solomon which is the backbone of the play.

Brecht is always entertaining. He is also vulgar, in the Shakespearean, not the Restoration, way, and his most vital creations are the poor, the weak and the afflicted. His gallery of these characters is magnificent. With the rich and the powerful, he, not surprisingly, fails to be convincing: his hatred of them is too great for his artistry to overcome. He can only make stock caricatures.

When his power of creating character comes into contact with a theme worthy of them, a masterpiece can emerge, and such a masterpiece is *Mutter Courage*, which Brecht wrote before the war, when he was in Scandinavia. It was first produced in Zürich during the war and then in 1949, notably, in Berlin, with Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel, in the name part. The play can still be seen there, for it is the biggest success of Brecht's Berlin company and draws thousands of Western Berliners across the border to the Schumannstrasse.

Mutter Courage is the story of a camp trader during the Thirty Years' War. Mother Courage has a wagon which is drawn by her three children and from it she sells food, equipment, drink and the hundred and one things for which NAAFI is responsible nowadays. She lives on war and is content to do so, though she pays lip-service in the conventional way to the ideal of peace, and is deeply concerned in keeping her children out of the uglier side of war. But, as a recruiting sergeant observes, 'Those that live by war must give something to it,' and one by one the children fall victims to their own virtues (such is the topsy-turveydom of war that it is the virtues, not the weaknesses, that kill), leaving Mother Courage, old and bent, at the end to pull her tattered, empty wagon (for trade too has failed her) to an inevitably dismal and anonymous grave.

This most moving attack on war and mankind's tragic addiction to it is always convincing because it is never obtrusively political. The villain of the piece is not one type of human being as opposed to another, but human nature itself, which at all levels seeks its own advantage at all costs. Mother Courage is herself really an embodiment of that capitalism which Brecht abhors, though in a small and never very successful way. On this level Brecht is able to see her—a humble and misguided representative of the people—with that compassion which he cannot bring to bear on richer and more powerful capitalists. There are in this play no representatives of the 'upper classes': the nearest is the padre, superb realisation of a lazy man who is always able to find the best reasons for doing nothing. The real powers behind the war, the kings and generals and so on, are only spoken of, and then with a sort of resigned acceptance, as if no one were really questioning their right to play such havoc with the lives of their fellow mortals.

In *Herr Puntila* there is none of this effectively subtle approach: the rich man and the poor man are placed opposite one another on the stage in all their political nakedness. And the success is correspondingly smaller. The play tells of a rich landowner who is a good fellow when drunk but in his sober moments is selfish and overbearing. His servant Matti leaves him in the end, since he cannot come to terms with this vacillating egoist. The weakness of the play is that Brecht cannot convince us that his sober Puntila is real. Puntila in his cups is a genuine person, if a somewhat crass one, but Puntila sober is a monster: the most we can believe of him is that he must be suffering from a tremendous hang-over. He could, we feel, once the headache is gone, be both human and sober. But Brecht, perhaps this time giving in to his politics, allows no compromise.

It would be possible to draw a fairly close parallel between Brecht and Sean O'Casey, not only on the political side, but also in the power of creating common people. They differ most in their language. Brecht, though in fact a poet of outstanding quality, is never poetic in his dialogue: he prefers dialect, racy, vulgar and, above all, simple: not for him the flowery Irishisms. He is also never guilty of the starry symbolism of later O'Casey. If he is symbolic at all, it is in the indirect manner of Joxer.

His stage technique is carefully thought out and exhaustively documented, and has gained for him the reputation of being an innovator. Its whole purpose is to create a critical audience. The onlookers are there, he says, not to accept but to judge: they must not be allowed to identify themselves with the persons in the play before them, but must be able to look at them objectively. To create these conditions, Brecht has written a set of maxims, in which actors are instructed not to identify themselves with their characters, but to play them critically, themselves aware of the weaknesses and strengths of the character they are portraying. The play, too, must be presented in a series of self-contained

scenes, each containing a central idea which is summed up in a few words in the programme or on the screen before the scene is played, so that the audience can consider and judge the idea before the next is illustrated.

Music, too (all the plays have songs), must be used objectively, to point contrasts rather than to reinforce the mood, and scenery should not try to create an illusion of reality, but should indicate the broad background of the play's theme.

These ideas appear more novel on paper than on the stage, and really they are broadly the principles of comedy, which Brecht applies to plays of more serious content. Sometimes, in fact, he does not apply them too closely: the wagon hung with hams and leather straps and later torn and bedraggled, which dominates the scene of *Mutter Courage* from beginning to end, cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered an indication. It is as real as Mother Courage herself.

But, allowing for such exceptions, Brecht generally sticks closely and with success to his technique of alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*, he calls it). He believes so firmly in his ideas that he will not allow his plays to be produced on lines other than those approved by him. To ensure this, he composes 'models', in which the text of the play is reproduced with line-by-line instructions as to how they should be spoken and acted. These instructions must be strictly followed. A producer or an actor may suggest an alteration if he wishes, but Brecht reserves to himself the right of approval.

Well, artists have the right to be arrogant about their work if they can get away with it. Whether the public will take the work on the artist's terms is dependent finally on one thing—merit. The German public pays Brecht's price willingly, conscious that he is worth it. And one can be grateful that in this bitter world of ours, in which all judgments have the smell of politics about them, the Germans have the wisdom to realise that.

DAVID CAMPBELL

LOVE WHO POINTS THE SWALLOW HOME

Love who points the swallow home
And scarves the russet at his throat,
Dreaming in the needle's eye,
Guide us through the maze of glass
Where the bull-dozer cannot pass,
With your silent clarity.

There where blood and sap are one,
Thrush's heart and daisy's root
Keep the measure of the dance
Though within their cage of bone
Griefs and tigers stalk alone
Locked in private arrogance.

Lay the shadows of our fear
With the brilliance of your light,
Naked we can meet the storm,
Travellers who journeyed far
To find you at our own front door,
O love who points the swallow home.

SENTENCE OF BORSTAL TRAINING

FREDERICK LAWTON

'PENALTIES, therefore, regularly seem to be *juris positivi et non naturalis*, as to their degree and applications, and therefore in different ages and states have been set higher and lower according to the exigence of the State and wisdom of the law giver.' So wrote the seventeenth-century Chief Justice Hale in his *Pleas of the Crown*.

What is the exigence of the State in 1950? How wise are the law givers now? The Howard League for Penal Reform, in a recent pamphlet[1] tries to answer these questions in relation to the offenders between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who, in the words of the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, have had passed upon them 'sentences of Borstal training'.

The first part of this pamphlet describes the Borstal training system as it is today and brings out clearly the successful efforts which are being made by the Prison Commissioners to solve the great administrative problem which confronts them, namely the proper classification of youthful offenders. If Borstal training is to do any good to those who undergo it, the condition precedent is that like should mix with like: young bullies with bad records should be kept apart from immature novices in crime. This is being done through the machinery of the reception centres to which all offenders are sent after conviction. There they have medical, educational and psychological examinations and their records are studied. Posting orders to Borstal institutions are based on the results of these examinations considered against the background of personal records. Youngest lads with good records go to 'open' institutions like the Hollesby Bay Colony, where they are employed in the extensive market gardens there; older lads with bad records undergo their training in converted prisons such as the old convict station at Portland.

Part I of this pamphlet ends with a number of mild criticisms and recommendations which the Prison Commissioners would no doubt gladly heed and carry out if they had the necessary money. Borstal institutions, say the Howard League, are over-full (often with youths who should never have been sent there at all) and under-staffed. The same criticisms could be made of most public schools. Amidst these mild criticisms is one to which mild language is inappropriate, namely that 'Approved School absconders, especially the Care and Protection cases' should not be confined in Borstal Institutions at all. Under the provisions of section 72 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, any boy (or indeed girl), who is over sixteen and who has absconded from an Approved School, can be arrested without a warrant, brought before magistrates and sentenced to Borstal training. Since a boy can be committed to an Approved School merely because his parent or guardian is unfit to exercise proper control over him, it follows that the same boy, although he has committed no crime and shown no irresponsible tendencies beyond a desire to leave school, can later be sentenced to pass his adolescence amongst young criminals, mostly burglars and housebreakers. During the year 1947, 106 boys and 41 girls were sent to Borstal institutions for 'other non-indictable offences'. These figures in the Prison Commissioners' Report for the year 1948 can only refer to boys and girls who were sent to Borstal institutions because they had absconded from Approved Schools. This is a scandal.

The second half of the pamphlet is entitled 'Borstal as seen through the eyes of a Borstal Chaplain'. It sounded as if it might be the more interesting half, as little was said in the other half about moral training; and what was said came after a paragraph headed 'Trade Training and Earnings' and just before one headed 'Sexual Problems'. If Part I does give an accurate account of the system of moral training applied in Borstal institutions, the Prison Commissioners are surely relying

[1] *Borstal—A Critical Survey*, published by the Howard League for Penal Reform

over much on the fact that 'the staff are all physically vigorous, many of them very athletic, and they provide living proof of the fact that honesty and religion are not so many signs of effeminacy and weakness.'

There was a promise that religious instruction would be discussed in Part II. It was. The reverend author set out his opinion that religion might have 'a stronger appeal if Christianity was presented [to Borstal inmates] as a way of life which would help towards the curing of their sickness, rather than as a religion to save them from their sins.'

This sloppy thinking is contrary to the experience of the ages; it makes nonsense of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and is itself nonsense. Yet, since about 1930, the holders of views such as these have had much success in forcing them on the Home Office. More and more amenities have been provided in Borstal institutions in the apparent belief that greater comfort and less prison will lead to better morality.

Experience is beginning to show, however, that the provision of greater amenities and the disappearance of a prison atmosphere from Borstal institutions has had little, if any, effect upon the criminal activities of those who leave them. At the end of 1936, 53.8 per cent of the lads discharged between the years 1930–4 (when the training régime was more prison-like and strict than it is now) had not been reconvicted. At the end of 1946 (the last year for which figures are available) the same percentage for the years 1940–4 was 55.3 per cent. These figures do not, of course, justify or demand the restoration of a prison régime; but they do show that the provision of more and more amenities does not in itself stop crime. Now that the average annual cost of maintaining each Borstal inmate is approximately £209 2s. 2d., the Prison Commissioners should perhaps be invited to add no more amenities to Borstal institutions for the time being.

One disturbing feature about these percentages is the official attitude towards them which is that they show the success of the Borstal training system and justify its continued existence in its present form. If these percentages spell 'success', the Home Office must have the same view about the meaning of words as Humpty Dumpty.

The truth is that the time and money spent on every other Borstal inmate is wasted because nearly every other inmate comes back into Borstal or some other penal establishment within six years of release—and the percentages relate, of course, only to those ex-inmates whose guilt has been proved. Many must have acquired sufficient skill, either in crime or in the preparation and presentation of their defences in Court, to escape conviction. In terms of money, these same percentages mean that for the year ended 31 March 1947, approximately £265,000 of public money was wasted on Borstal institutions, since the net total expenditure on them in that year was £542,047.

The Prison Commissioners know where the heart of the matter lies. In their report published in December 1947 (Cmd. 7271) they commented upon the apparent lack of moral sense amongst Borstal inmates and their friends: they reported the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs (Boys) Prison as saying: 'Few are seriously perturbed by the fact that they have been committed to prison. Their numerous visitors in the main show no embarrassment . . . sympathy rather than blame is the common experience.' Until Borstal inmates acquire a moral sense, they will go on committing crimes—and a moral sense cannot be inculcated merely by means of home leave, vocational training or even the puppetry class which was mentioned in the Prison Commissioners' last report (Cmd. 7777).

'It is men, not buildings,' wrote the late Sir Alec Paterson, 'who will change the hearts and ways of misguided lads.' Before spending any more of the public's money on the material aspects of the Borstal institutions, the Prison Commissioners should consider spending a little more of it upon those who serve the inmates, particularly the housemasters (or assistant governors, Class II as they are now called). They can hardly expect queues of suitable applicants to form for housemasters' jobs when the salary offered on starting is £360 per annum and the qualifications expected are a good university degree or a number of years' officer service in the forces.

NEW BOOKS

UNPOPULAR ESSAYS

By Bertrand Russell. *Allen & Unwin.* 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by C. E. M. Joad

Through Bertrand Russell's new book of essays run two continuing threads. The first is the part played by false ideas in producing and increasing human misery. While conceding that 'the evils that men inflict on each other, and by reflection upon themselves, have their main source in evil passions rather than in ideas or beliefs', Russell also holds that bad philosophy plays its part, both as affording convenient rationalisations for malice and sadism and as persuading men to embark on courses of conduct painful to themselves and harmful to others, in the belief that they are carrying out God's will, furthering the interests of the State, or promoting the emancipation of dispossessed classes. Much of the book is, accordingly, devoted to an examination and discussion of the evil effects produced by false philosophies, notably those of Hegel, Kant, Marx and Plato. The essay entitled 'Philosophy's Ulterior Motives' extends this criticism of the great philosophers to embrace philosophy itself which, Russell holds, is only 'a stage in intellectual development and is not compatible with mental maturity.' The effects of bad philosophies are illustrated in two of the most amusing essays in the book, entitled respectively 'An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish' and 'Ideas that have Harmed Mankind'.

All this is conveyed with the high entertainment value that one has learned to expect from Russell's non-technical writings. To read these essays is a continuous delight. The most distinctive feature of Russell's writings is the development of sequences of argument leading, apparently, to irresistible conclusions. If these are such as to appear to Russell foolish and harmful, they are greeted with dry and entertaining comment. These comments constitute the main element in the celebrated Russell irony. If the conclusions are such as to appear to him to be true and salutary, he makes use of the resources of one of the best prose styles in contemporary English letters to embellish them with an austere eloquence.

I will give examples of both kinds. 'An Outline of Intellectual Rubbish' makes great play with the view that the notion of sin is a by-product of man's self-importance, a view which Russell's wide reading enables him to sustain with many curious examples. 'The whole of theology in regard to hell no less than to heaven' revolves, he holds, round this notion of human importance. He comments: 'Since all theologians are men, this postulate has met with little opposition.' Russell gives an account of St. Thomas Aquinas's speculations as to what, granted the resurrection of the body, happens on Resurrection Day to the bodies of hereditary cannibals: How, in fact, is the cannibal 'to be properly roasted in hell if all his body is restored to its original owners?' 'This,' Russell comments, 'is a puzzling question, as the Saint rightly perceives.' To take one more example from 'Ideas That Have Harmed Mankind', these, he thinks, are almost without exception rationalisations of impulses to inflict cruelty. Many instances are quoted of conduct inspired by the view that physical chastisement results in moral improvement. 'How much brutality,' Russell wonders, 'has been justified by the rhyme:

"A dog, a wife and a walnut tree,
The more you beat them the better
they be."

'I have no experience of the moral effect of flagellation on walnut trees,' Russell comments, 'but no civilised person would now justify the rhyme as regards wives.'

The second thread that runs through a number of the essays is the constantly

reiterated necessity for the establishment of world government. The essay entitled 'The Future of Mankind' begins with the arresting announcement that, unless something totally unforeseeable occurs, before the end of the century, one of three possibilities will have been realised. Either the human race together (probably) with life as a whole will have been destroyed; or it will be enormously diminished in numbers and have reverted to barbarism; or else the world will be united under a single Government. Russell does not presume to say which of these contingencies is the most probable although, in view of the record of men's past follies and of their present enmities, it is hard to resist the conclusion that it is not the third—not, at any rate, the third achieved by agreement although, Russell thinks, world government may well be imposed by force.

If however, world government could be established, 'all the great achievements of mankind will quickly lead to an era of happiness and well-being, such as has never before been dreamt of.' There follows a passage of noble eloquence describing the golden future that lies within our grasp if only we have enough collective wisdom to avail ourselves of the gifts of science. That is why 'the present moment is the most important and most crucial that has ever confronted mankind.'

Not all Russell's sequences of argument are equally compelling in regard to their conclusions. Take, for example, the argument based upon the alleged theological premise that man is 'what is of most importance in the universe of created beings.' Russell points out that life on this planet is temporary only, and whether the earth loses its atmosphere or the sun explodes or grows cold, a time will come when the earth can no longer sustain life. When he reflects upon this fact in conjunction with the long prologue of evolution, he concludes that the prospect detracts from the importance of man. It is difficult to see why. Waiving the possibility of the existence of angels, let us grant the doctrine of the supreme importance of man among created beings. Let us also suppose—what is by no means certain—that before these astronomical catastrophes have occurred, man will *not* have contrived to transfer

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himself to another of the many planets in the Milky Way which are capable of sustaining life, as we know it. It is surely a misunderstanding of Christian theology to suppose that the doctrine of the importance of man entails his continued existence on this planet or even his continued bodily existence in space. Christian theology teaches that the familiar world of things, including human bodies, moving about in space and changing in time, will come to an end. It speaks of the Last Day and of the Second Coming of Christ as events marking the termination of the earthly order. It further insists that man has an immortal soul whose true home is elsewhere and that his life is, rightly regarded, a preparation and training. It is as if mankind as a whole were going to school. Why, then, should the discovery that school days will come to an end, and that the school itself will ultimately be burned down, be thought to demonstrate the unimportance of the scholars?

There are other occasions upon which Russell's accustomed cogency of argument deserts him when he has to deal with religious beliefs, precisely because of his inability to accept the premises which the beliefs entail. 'Both men,' he writes of Gladstone and Lenin, 'in support of their respective faiths, ventured into realms in which, from ignorance, they could only cover themselves with ridicule—Gladstone in Biblical criticism, Lenin in philosophy.' So warped is Russell's judgment in his treatment of Christianity that I find it hard to resist the temptation of adding his name as a third to those of this distinguished pair.

Apart from the occasional lapses into which he is betrayed by his intolerance of religion, Russell's book is a sustained plea for toleration, humanity and good sense in action and for empiricism and scepticism in theory. Like its author, it is, therefore, dated, not in respect of the truths it enunciates but in respect of the times in which they are enunciated. For the times in which we live are already far gone in persecution and intolerance in practice, while in the realm of theory, where truth is doubtful or unknown, men hasten to supply its place by converting their conjectures into dogmas.

THE AGE OF TERROR

By Leslie Paul. *Faber & Faber.* 18s.

Reviewed by Ernest Bramsted

The position of Mr. Leslie Paul, who first attracted attention with his book *The Annihilation of Man*, can be fairly described as that of a Christian Existentialist, English version. For he combines a genuine belief in the life of the spirit and the restoration of Christian values with a sober and concrete observation of political and social trends, so often missing in the more complicated abstractions of his Continental colleagues. Being mainly concerned with a way out of the moral sickness of our age, he does not jump quickly to offer us his own brand of therapy, but insists first on a thorough diagnosis covering a wide range of topics and phenomena.

When the author discusses the modern nation-state and its impact on the genesis of both Fascism and Communism, he does so in a lucid and informative manner, avoiding cheap or prejudiced explanations. The same can be said of his brief accounts of the ideologies of Liberalism, Marxism, Anarchism and Fascism and of his shrewd remarks on the dilemma of Continental Social-Democracy. Yet one would have welcomed a more penetrating discussion of the nature and the roots of ideologies as such: of man as an ideological animal. Here Mr. Paul, who acknowledges his debts to Toynbee and Berdyaev, could have profited by the late Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*, which fifteen years after publication remains a classic unsurpassed in its field.

Mr. Paul is at his best when discussing the discrepancy between ideology and social reality in the case histories of Russia and Germany. He sees present-day Russia determined by three major factors: (1) Marxism, a product of Western development; (2) the tradition of Orientalism or of the Russian Empire; (3) the passing of time which has marked the difference between the generation that grew up under Stalin's rule and the old guard of the Bolsheviks, most of whom were liquidated in the thirties. The early Bolsheviks had lived in Berlin, Zurich and London and, in addition to Marx, had read their Kant and Hegel; the present hierarchy knows

only Russia and a Stalinist version of Marxism, and has fallen in with a pre-1917 semi-oriental and imperialist tradition. Probably Mr. Paul somewhat over-emphasises the difference between the two eras of the Westerner Lenin and of the Georgian Stalin, for after every allowance is made for this discrepancy, it still remains true that in both periods the Marxist practice has been in a way the direct negative of early Marxist theory. Though lip-service is paid to the masses, the leading rôle is with an élite, with the party cadres. The active, disciplined minority rules with an iron rod over the passive majority. As M. Raymond Aron has recently remarked, 'the breach between the covering ideology (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and the practical reality (the omnipotence of the party) was completed by Lenin. Stalin has carried it out to its logical conclusion.'

The chapter probing into the abyss of Nazi Germany contains a running commentary on the views of that profound and stimulating, if ponderous, German scholar, Alfred Weber, now the doyen of German sociologists. Mr. Paul appreciates Weber's attempt to interpret recent German history as a case of demoniacal possession, but is disturbed by his pantheism, which he regards as 'yet another of those efforts, so peculiar to German genius, so fatal for youth, to create a religion without God.'

In spite of being more extensive than intensive, this is a knowledgeable tract for the times, inspired by a strong belief in German culture and prompted by a zest for the recovery of its meaning.

THE RUSSO-GERMAN ALLIANCE

August 1939–June 1941

By A. Rossi. Translated by John and Micheline Cullen. *Chapman & Hall.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Max Beloff

M. Rossi's account of Russo-German relations between 1939 and 1941, originally published in Paris in 1949, has been revised for the present edition to include newer material; but the basis for the account remains the German archives from which the most important documents were those included in the State Department publication: *Nazi-Soviet Relations*. It is still the best account we have of this aspect of the international history of the period, although its sensational title is hardly borne out by the contents. It is surely to stretch the meaning of the word 'alliance' too far, to use it to describe what was more accurately the Soviet version of 'appeasement'. Clearly fear rather than greed was the dominant *motif* in Soviet conduct in the period—and the territorial gains at which the Russians grasped were the product of the Soviet notion of what security consists — that inextricable medley of Marxist fundamentalism and of strategic concepts, inherited from the Tsars rather than developed in the light of modern warfare.

Even in its latest recension, M. Rossi's narrative adds little to our knowledge of the course of negotiations leading up to the agreement of August 1939. He is disposed to accept the view that the fundamental German decision was made on August 3–4 but still allows (unnecessarily in my view) for the possibility that the telegram from Moscow shown to Ciano on 12 August was a 'manœuvre to bolster up Ciano's morale.' At any rate, his narrative lends no countenance to the theory, still fashionable in some quarters, that the agreement was a product of bungling diplomacy on the part of the Western Powers. If it had been Lord Halifax rather than Mr. (as he then was) Strang who was sent to Moscow, the upshot would have been the same. If it could get its terms, the Soviet Government was determined to try 'appeasement'. And the Germans, given their fundamental aims, had every interest in letting them do it, and no scruples about the price, which others would have to pay. M. Rossi's account would have been strengthened by a reference to the German Foreign Office's circular letter to its Embassies, explaining the agreement which has been printed in the German edition only of *Nazi-Soviet Relations*.

Unfortunately, the highly-interesting book by M. Rossi on the French Communist Party in the early part of the war

(*Physiologie du Parti Communiste*) has not been published in this country. For this reason the most interesting and original part of M. Rossi's book may well be his account of the advantages, psychological as well as material, that the Germans derived from their Russian 'alliance'. The total silence that Communist writers preserve (for instance, Mr. Andrew Rothstein in his *History of the U.S.S.R.*) about the treasonable activities of Communist parties in that period, makes it essential that this rôle should be brought into the limelight, even though the Germans themselves may have attached more importance to the economic side of their collaboration.

The revelations about the Hitler-Molotov conversations in November 1940, contained in *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, have made the reasons for the collapse of the 'alliance' abundantly clear. Both sides had revealed how far they were prepared to go; and the Germans, with a war in the West still on their hands, were not prepared to put up with Stalin's 'blackmail'. The struggle for control in the Balkans that winter—especially in Bulgaria—is illuminated by M. Rossi from some unpublished German documents. In the end, as M. Rossi points out, the revelation of the extent of Russian ambitions played into German hands, although (as we now know) German brutality throughout Eastern Europe, as in Russia itself, threw away all the psychological advantages that fear of Communism had given to German diplomacy.

M. Rossi cannot (in the absence of any real evidence from the Soviet side) explain the apparent blindness of the Soviet leaders to their imminent danger—a blindness to which Mr. Churchill's third volume has recently called attention. 'Right up to the last minute,' writes M. Rossi, 'the Soviet leaders were hoping to dodge the blow. Stalin could not conceive why Hitler, after going to such lengths to avoid a second front, should wish to create one himself just when the situation was, on the whole, less in his favour than in 1939.' He can find no support for the rumours that a final attempt was made from the Russian side to appease the enemy: 'all that is certain is that the Soviet leaders were ready to come to an agreement with Germany until just before the outbreak of war and that they were willing to pay the necessary price for it.' Whether M. Rossi is equally right in believing that Stalin's aim today is to revive his 'Rapallo policy of collaboration with Germany . . . under very different and far more favourable conditions' is something that the future alone can show. Nothing in the past suggests that it is improbable.

THE COMING DEFEAT OF COMMUNISM

By James Burnham. *Jonathan Cape.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Alan Wood

The gist of Mr. Burnham's book, for all his elaboration of argument and illustration, can be summed up simply in the once-familiar catch-phrase: 'Don't you know there's a war on?' He asks the question with urgency and indignation. His thesis is that Russia has already started the Third World War on the political-subversive front, and that fighting back vigorously on the same front offers the best chance of achieving victory without a major shooting war. His practical proposals include the suppression of internal Communist Parties in the West, the support of all anti-Communists from de Gaulle to Chiang Kai-Shek, and the organisation of 'spear-heads' among refugees from behind the Iron Curtain.

His publishers say that Mr. Burnham, once editor of an American Marxist journal, 'broke with every variety of Communism' in 1940. The fact is that, in a sense, he has remained a Marxist; only he is now a Marxist standing on his head. Many former habits of thought survive. His writing is still steeped in the concept of *la lutte finale:* the difference is that he is now backing the other side. Mr. Burnham is typically Marxist when he writes that 'Wars . . . are not accidents of history, but integral and even normal parts in the process of history.' So, too, is his insistence on seeing everything in terms of black and

white, negative and positive, with nothing but a disappearing residue in between. Just as Marx scorned the middle classes, so Burnham condemns as 'the distilled essence of political indecision' any idea of a Third Force between Russia and America. Finally, Burnham's thinking has always been coloured by the Marxist assumption that politics can be a science, and therefore a subject for accurate prediction. The victory of the proletariat, wrote Marx and Engels, is 'inevitable'. Burnham uses the phrase 'The Inevitability of Communist Defeat'.

Mr. Burnham's habit of basing best-sellers on dogmatic political prophecy has given unkind commentators the chance to recall such things as his convincing proof, in 1940, that Hitler was bound to win the war. It is easy, too, to criticise his present prescriptions. How exactly does he propose to suppress Communist Parties? As for his fondness for Russian exiles and emigrants —was Napoleon defeated by rallying the discredited remnants of the *Ancien Régime*? Was it not rather by the emergence of a new force in Europe, that of nationalism? For all this, Mr. Burnham makes stimulating reading, well worthy of study. He allows us to assess the position of Western democracy very much as it must appear in the eyes of intelligent Marxists in the Kremlin, who must be continually puzzled by our failure to embark long ago on the kind of policies which Burnham advocates. Best service of all, he will at least provoke thought on what end can be found to the cold war except a world-wide shooting war; and it is a sorry commentary on the state of political publishing in Britain that nothing comparable is available on such a subject from our own thinkers.

THE LETTERS OF MARCEL PROUST

Translated and edited by Mina Curtiss. *Chatto & Windus.* 21s.

Reviewed by John Cocking

Proust once wrote of *Remembrance of Things Past* as 'a long book, which I call a novel because it isn't as fortuitous as memoirs (it is fortuitous only to the degree that life itself is) . . .' The *Letters*, 'fortuitous' in a way that the novel is not, more even than most memoirs, may astound and disappoint the English reader of Scott-Moncrieff's translation as the *Correspondance Générale* astounded and disappointed some of Proust's readers in the thirties; yet in the novel Proust made it clear enough that art is life transformed, the artist separated from the man by the success of his metamorphosis. Where other writers fight inch by inch against the shadow falling between conception and creation, Proust's struggle is with the supernatural dynamo which generates the light that never was, and which a chance flick may suddenly spin into brilliance, or much misapplied horse-power fail to move. Adapting the vocabulary of Bergson, as the Symbolists adapted Hegel's and Coleridge Kant's, Proust spoke of style as a revelation of the occult: 'Style is in no way an embellishment as certain people think,' he wrote to Prince Antoine Bibesco, 'it is not even a question of technique; it is, like colour with certain painters, a quality of vision, a revelation of a private universe which each one of us sees and which is not seen by others. The pleasure an artist gives us is to make us know an additional universe.'

The Proust of the *Letters* lives not in his own, additional universe but in his own little area of ours. One can manage to feel as superior to Proust the man as one feels awed by Proust the artist, and this the form of the letters allows and legend encourages. We are looking at something of Proust with a vision more independent of Proust than it can ever be while we read his novel; we are looking not *with* his vision but *at* his personal perspective of the real world, which may seem at its best merely eccentric, and at its worst pathological. And yet the reader who has had his fill of legends and can lay aside his various moral anxieties will be astonished at other things—that, in spite of the neurosis and egotism, there is a tremendous deal of common sense, wisdom and even morality. The *Letters* are a far cry from the novel; they show why the novel lacks what it does—an understanding of sound

human relationships; but something of the power which created the novel is in them too.

Mrs. Curtiss has chosen the letters well, and her admirably concise notes show a proper regard for the potential gaps in the reader's knowledge of the historical and biographical background. Here are some of the people Proust analysed and recomposed for his novel, fusing their components with his own. If the style of the artist is lacking, except as a ghostly caricature of itself, the style of the man is there. If the sensibility of Proust's poetry is reflected chiefly as a neurotic querulousness, his intellectual strength sometimes shows through in statesmanlike comments on people and events.

In translating the style of the man, Mina Curtiss had a task less overwhelming than Scott-Moncrieff's. In rejecting what she calls 'the king's English' and 'the native American tongue', she was perhaps paying attention to the scorn Proust expressed for the Republic's French exemplified by Ganderax (who rewrote his contributor's articles for the *Revue de Paris*). 'Each writer,' he wrote, 'is bound to create his own language as each violinist must create his own "tone" '; but he went on to say that 'between the tone of some mediocre violinist and Thibaud's tone (for the same note) there is an infinitely small difference that embodies a whole world!' It is perhaps not entirely wise in a translator to hope to achieve what Mrs. Curtiss calls 'a kind of English that . . . Proust might have written, had he been bilingual.' It is unreasonable for the English reader to be disturbed by the Americanisms of an American translator, perhaps. They do seem to carry Proust unnecessarily far from Paris—Proust who addressed a letter to Marie Nordlinger 'Detroit, Avenue, Lake Ontario' under the impression that 'Avenue' was the name of the province—but not as far as the occasional failures. 'It is chiefly from the point of view of architecture that Laon is curious, more savoury than any other because the green shoot is not yet open', belongs to no man's land. *Savoureux* for the translator is difficult, 'savoury' impossible for the reader.

CONFESSIONS OF A POET

By Paul Verlaine. Introduction by Peter Quennell, translated from the French by Joanna Richardson. *Thames & Hudson Ltd.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by Ronald Duncan

It is a pity that poets have to have a life at all. Fortunately, those who buy this book, seeking salubrious details concerning 'the Satanic youth' and 'the infernal spouse', will be extremely disappointed. For Verlaine closes his confessions on the very day he meets Rimbaud. He gives no further comment on this international literary scandal than this:

'. . . jusqu'à l'arrivée à Paris, vers octobre 1871, d'Arthur Rimbaud, pour qui ma femme conçut tout de suite une jalousie absolument injuste, alors! dans le sens vilainement désobligeant qu'elle l'entendait . . .'

As Peter Quennell remarks, in a most restrained and balanced introduction, 'Deception could scarcely go further.' Perhaps it was self-deception?

For the rest, Verlaine's *Confessions* consist of an account of his childhood and playing truant from school and his protracted courtship with his innocent young wife who was convinced she was pregnant because the poet had kissed her! For the most part, it is written with simplicity and restraint. Being a poet himself, Verlaine does not attempt the poetic in his prose, but writes a casual, idiomatic language, free from any ornate literary clutter.

One gets bored with his lapses and excesses in drinking absinthe. It is extraordinary how people will boast of over-drinking, whereas they will never dare confess to over-eating. Fortunately, the poet spares us the usual remorse; indeed, though he makes some show at self-reproach, it is not very convincing.

The only deep emotion, and obviously the key to Verlaine's character and life, is displayed whenever the poet mentions his mother:

'. . . I am deeply sorry to have saddened her, and full of affection all for her and her alone . . . but she has vanished! and the rest of my dream is lost in the growing grief of a vain and endless search. How

wonderful when I awake! my mother hasn't left me, none of it is true; but then—and the blow is always terrible—my memory comes back to me: my mother is dead, and it is indeed true!'

Of his poetry, Verlaine says little; but fortunately allows a hitherto unpublished poem to be printed.

'O l'Innocente que j'adore
De tout mon cœur, en attendant
Qu'a ce bonheur timide encore
S'ajoute le plaisir ardent,

Vienne l'instant, ô l'Innocente,
Où sous mes mains libres enfin
Tombera l'armure impuissante
De la robe et du linge fin.

Et luise au jour chaud de la lampe
Intime de ce premier soir
Ton corps ingénu vers quoi rampe
Mon désir guettant ton espoir,

Et vibre en la nuit nuptiale
Sous mon baiser jamais transi
Ta chair naguère virginale,
Nuptiale enfin, Dieu merci!'

It is here, in such lines of exquisite assonance and internal melody, that Verlaine resides. All the rest is irrelevant, wholly irrelevant.

JOURNEY TO YESTERDAY

By Silvia Baker. *Peter Davies.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Henry Baerlein

This is a most entertaining book, in which we travel with an artist from Tahiti to Cyprus, London studios to Spain, with so many excellent stories on the way that I had the glorious sensation of being the Madonna of a Holy Week procession in Seville, hung about with two million pesetas' worth of jewels lent by a pious Duchess. It is only possible to mention a few of the jewels, such as the remark of Sir William Rothenstein when he tasted the Benger's food which his wife, on account of her influenza, was having at dinner. 'Alice,' he exclaimed, 'What a delightful dish! We must have this *every* night.' On the voyage to Tahiti the authoress shared a cabin with two Frenchwomen; she feared that some day there would be a mistake with the tooth-brushes. I knew a foreigner whom an Englishman found using his tooth-brush and who excused himself by saying that he had thought it belonged to the ship. That voyage is wonderfully described, as is the life in Papeete, where a notice in the hotel says that *Messieurs les voyageurs sont priés de ne pas jouer avec les domestiques.* In this house were two Gauguin pictures that were once used as dart-boards; but the people are not going to be caught again and are buying all the pictures of an elderly Dutchman as fast as he can paint them.

In Cyprus, she was hypnotised into taking a house because the agent had eyes like ink-wells; the priest's son was one of her models; he demanded flowers behind his head, so that his sister in America to whom he would send the painting would laugh. She would laugh, he said, because she loved him. When once James Bone criticised Miss Baker's drawings—and those in this book are delightful—and she remarked that she knew her limitations, he replied that 'No one knows his limitations.'

Whatever her limitations, and whether she knows them or not, Miss Baker has given us a charming account of her travels.

THE TRAVELLER'S TREE

By Patrick Leigh-Fermor. *John Murray,* 21s.

'Short of writing a thesis in many volumes, only a haphazard, almost picaresque approach can suggest the peculiar mood and tempo of the Caribbean.' Patrick Leigh-Fermor is quite capable of writing many volumes on the Caribbean, or anything else, given time. Words flow from him in torrents, bubbling, sparkling, gushing from an apparently inexhaustible reservoir of energy, curiosity, memory and imagination. But there is very little haphazard about him; there was nothing haphazard, for instance, in the plans he made to kidnap the German general in Crete, and there is, in fact, something very methodical about the way in which the first visit he made on any island in the Caribbean was to either the local library or the local antiquary.

The first thing to decide in any enterprise is what you are *not* going to do. Mr. Leigh-Fermor was not going to write a guide-book; he was not going to deal with political or economic problems; he knew no Spanish, so he was not going to write about the purely Spanish islands. He has concentrated on the people, customs and history of the French and the British islands: Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti and their satellites.

Even the best of travel books can be irritating. It is extremely difficult to write descriptions of a foreign country (except in Baedeker style) without implying that you are in some way superior to the reader. Mr. Leigh-Fermor, however, is frankly delighted and surprised at what he has seen, and his enjoyment of it all is so wholehearted that it must attract and charm even the surliest sufferer from travel bores.

Mr. Leigh-Fermor is at his best in the French islands. He has made excellent use of the Memoirs of Father Labat, whose *Nouveau Voyage aux Iles d'Amerique* was published in 1722. The remarkable thing is how little, in spite of all the bloodshed and upheaval, the real life of the islands has changed since those days. Nothing on the islands is more than 400 years old, except the religions and rhythms which the heroes brought from Africa. For the vast majority of negroes, their life and beliefs have hardly changed at all. Mr. Leigh-Fermor describes these with a wealth of detail, and it is this which gives *The Traveller's Tree* a peculiar interest. The book is admirably illustrated, with photographs by Mr. Leigh-Fermor's companion, A. Costa.

LOVE'S SHADOW

By Ada Leverson. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.

THE LIMIT

By Ada Leverson. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.

Ada Leverson's novels, now being reissued by Chapman & Hall, are all the more delightful ('Fun' is *her* word) because they are not quite accountable. From her, from Oscar Wilde's Sphinx, and the cynosure of wonderfully bright young men, one would have expected glitter. Well, it is true that Wilde's famous letter to her, written after she had got up at six o'clock on a cold morning to meet him on his release from prison, inspired the whole of one chapter ('In the Rose Garden') in *The Limit*, and the delicious dialogue must, in a dozen places, be an echo of this greatest of conversational decades. But the novels are not, as I said, quite accountable, nor quite what Grant Richards must have had in mind when he persuaded her to begin writing them. For they are sad: not with the tear-jerking melodrama of *Dorian Grey* or Robert Hichen's *The Woman with a Fan*, but with the melancholy undertones of what you find in another very different classic of the same period, *Eliza*. Just as Barry Pain suggested beneath all the ridiculous misfortunes of his struggling clerk the heartbreak of losing his 'berth', so Mrs. Leverson hinted always at two catastrophes—jealousy and boredom. Her scenes are so often after-the-ball-is-over or *tête-à-tête* in a Knightsbridge flat 'exactly like thousands of other small, new, white flats', or between two lovers when passion is dying into ashes, and 'the marvellous instinct with which women are usually credited seems too often to desert them on the only occasions when it would be of any real use. One would say it was there for trivialities only, since in a crisis they are usually dense, fatally doing the wrong thing.'

And all this under the guise of the very lightest of society romances, where amateur theatricals go wrong, and absurd incidents cause misunderstandings, and ridiculous foreigners are brought to tea! Her skill in manipulating her stories and 'turning' her scenes is amazing, and yet, although she followed Bernard Shaw as dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*, it is not theatrical. It is true that the novels are so arranged that they appear to consist of one interesting situation after another (notice the gradual stages by which, in *Love's Shadow*, the heart of the plain, eccentric companion is broken); true, also, that the book must be tidily finished, but still on every occasion up to the very last, ends are left hanging, words are not quite said,

and connoisseurs of female novelists will recognise the subtle nuances which they have met before in *The Semi-Detached Couple*, *Elizabeth and her German Garden* and the eighteenth-century *A Simple Story* by Mrs. Inchbald (the first part only)—that is, period charm, accompanied by the half-sigh of a woman who has seen through all the pretences of society, but because, after all, there is nothing to take their place, must keep on pretending still. But the gift is simply pity for humanity, which is the source of gentleness. Henry James, as might be expected, had an inner meaning when he called her his Gentle Reader. So rare is the quality, at any time!

NEW NOVELS

GAETAN or THE STOCK-TAKING
By Edith de Born. *Chapman & Hall.* 8s. 6d.

THE BLACK FOX
By Gerald Heard. *Cassell.* 9s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

Gaetan is an extremely subtle and distinguished book. The story is built up in conversations between two women who are talking about Gaetan, the man they both loved. Irina was his wife: she is White Russian; Marie is Swiss-French: she was his mistress. The author is Austro-Hungarian-Italian, so there is a splendid pan-European flavour about it all, and occasionally there is a mis-choice of words to add piquancy. 'I don't quite get you,' for instance, is out of character. Gaetan is a two-faced enigma, according to which woman is talking, but he is dead so it does not matter. What does matter is the women themselves and woman in general. The burden is that women have to depend on men, and so they are bound to be unhappy and lonely because they live so long after they have stopped being sexually attractive. Marie and Irina are very intelligent and they have the truthfulness of creatures in hell who have nothing to lose; glum they are, but as stoic as a damned hero in a burning tomb; one cannot but admire them. They poke the fire in the cosy room and speak of the damned people they see

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in the fire being tortured by noble devils who rest as the fire sinks, like athletes exhausted by their sport. Irina says: 'Only the strong can be innocent in the way that Gaetan was. The crooked and vicious ways of women . . . are the ransom of their weakness.' But Marie says that women 'pay the bill' and that Irina is speaking of women 'as do some of the fathers of the church.' Irina was working in a Paris fashion house when Gaetan came and admired her flat and then got married to her in an offhand mood. Irina says she felt 'exalted' sitting doing petit-point listening to Gaetan's 'ideas'. But really she was feeling relieved from the boredom of her job, which was making her sick of the smells and struggles of the fashion clients trying to keep young. But love is more interesting to talk about. Marie's case was harder. She was going to have Gaetan's child, but had an abortion instead and became 'a spinster'. Of course by this time Gaetan has to be something rather special—or what are they making such a fuss about? An important business executive, rich. A brave Resistance hero, captured and tortured. Just what the women want, and as he is dead, what is to stop them? So this truthfulness in hell, and they do seem to be in hell, is not truthfulness about life but truthfulness about day-dreaming, the indirect truthfulness that shows a person's character by the wrong labels he adopts, speaking, as these women do, of the pains of love when they mean the pains of boredom. But whatever the food they need, they have not got it; they are starving. And this the author knows and pities and shows, in a book which is a masterpiece of its kind, delicate, sharp and not a word too long; and, as the subject is so painful, perhaps mercifully not very long.

Mr. Heard gives a splendid picture of a Cathedral Close in the 1870s, with the visible Fiend stalking the precincts to find whom he may devour, a couple of Canons jockeying for position, and over them all the Bishop, a modest wise man who knows that administrative ability is not necessarily of heavenly importance. The story is full of ghostly power. Canon Throcton has been passed over for preferment in favour of Canon Simpson, a commonplace man, Throcton thinks, and no gentleman. Canon Throcton is deathly proud; he is an Arabian scholar, and that is why he has missed promotion because the Bishop feels he is really much closer to the Sufis than to the Thirty Nine Articles. Making use of his Arabian learning, Throcton puts a spell on Canon Simpson. The immediate result of this spell (the usual affair of burning up hair-combings and nail-parings with malice prepense) is that the Fiend sends a black fox to dog the Canon's footsteps—a damnable smelly animal suffering from the mange. By the operation of sympathetic magic, Canon Simpson's hair now begins to come off in patches and when the spell is renewed, the bewitched man dies full of alopecia herpes and a longing for the grave. Canon Throcton is now heading straight for damnation but his sister, the amiable Miss Throcton, tutored by the Arabian savant she meets at the don's garden party, takes upon herself the loathsome fox-haunting of her sinful brother. The fearful smell, the croaking barks, the slimy touch of this dismal animal drive her at last to death, but her brother is saved by her devotion and roused in time to the dangers of his spiritual situation—he leaves hurriedly for Persia and the school of the savant. Mr. Heard writes with great humour and understanding; his character drawing is excellent, and so is his depiction of Anglicanism, its virtues and weaknesses—especially is it weak in matters of fiendish hauntings, because it is never quite sure whether there is a fiend or not. A particularly telling scene between Disraeli and the Patronage Secretary at No. 10 Downing Street gives him a chance to quote that lapidary masterpiece of an earlier Anglicanism 'Sacred to the Memory of the Very Reverend Dean . . . of this Cathedral, who in this place pursued the Cure of Souls for forty years without the least trace of enthusiasm.' In spite of a light touch, Mr. Heard is well aware of important turning-points in moral journeys, as shown, for instance, in Miss Throcton's dealings with the agitated Mrs. Simpson. This is a most entertaining story, very lively and erudite.

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